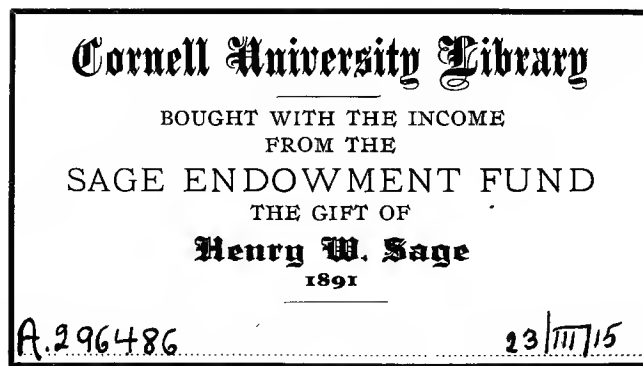


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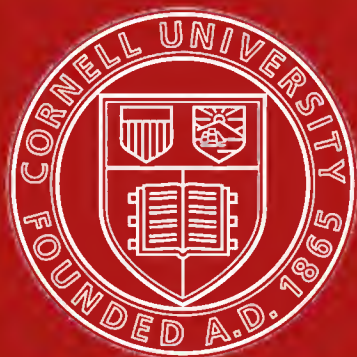
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Old English Houses of Alms

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OLD ENGLISH HOUSES OF ALMS

A Pictorial Record

With Architectural and Historical Notes

BY

SIDNEY HEATH



London

FRANCIS GRIFFITHS

34, Maiden Lane, Strand, W.C.

1910

To my Mother



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Preface

Some few years ago the author and illustrator of this volume began to make a series of drawings of old English almshouses and hospitals, a subject that had hitherto been much neglected. With the exception of some half-dozen examples, delineated and described in Dollman's *Ancient Domestic Architecture* (1858), one or two monographs devoted to single foundations, and an occasional paper in the published Transactions of our numerous Archæological Societies, the searcher after information relating to these interesting institutions, has had to rely on two very diversified classes of publications—the voluminous reports of the last Charity Commission (1813-27); and the local directory and guide book, wherein almshouses are generally dismissed in a few lines, and no illustration given. Dugdale's and Oliver's *Monasticons* contain a good deal of reliable information on the hospitals and kindred institutions attached to, or connected with religious houses, as also do such standard works as Hoare's *Wiltshire*, Hasted's *Kent*, Dugdale's *Warwickshire*, and Hutchins' *Dorset*, while the recently published *Victoria County Histories* give a good deal of interesting information that was unknown to exist in the days of the earlier county historians.

The author can rightly claim that, with the exception of Dollman, who dealt with some six or seven examples only, no series of drawings devoted entirely to almshouses and hospitals had been published, until those done by him, meeting with the approval of the Editor of *The Builder*, began, on July 11, 1908, to appear in the pages of that journal.

These drawings, supplemented by a few plans, and with additional letterpress, are here gathered together in book form.

The original idea was to give, in the form of an Introduction, a fairly full account of these old foundations from their first institution. This has been rendered unnecessary by the recent (Sep. 1909) publication of Miss Rotha Mary Clay's excellent and well-nigh exhaustive volume on *English Mediæval Hospitals*, a work which, although mainly confined to the purely historical and archæological side of the subject, has necessitated a revision of the author's original scheme in so far as regards the earlier history of these foundations. Miss Clay, keeping strictly within her title, deals with the mediæval examples only, that is to the year 1541, up to which time these charitable institutions were almost without exception, ecclesiastical in foundation, endowment, and administration, and essentially so with regard to planning and architecture. The reproduction of a kind

PREFACE—*continued.*

of isolated monastic infirmary, as found among other places at St. Mary's Hospital, Chichester, helped to confirm and perpetuate for many generations, the semi-ecclesiastical plan, and the purely ecclesiastical character of windows, doorways, and architectural details.

Interesting as are these early types to the ecclesiologist and the antiquary, it is mainly the 15th, 16th, and 17th century examples that have most to offer the modern architect, and the lover of the picturesque element in building. To the pious merchant and the benevolent noble of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries we owe some of the most beautiful portions of our parish churches, some of the finest specimens of domestic architecture we possess, and some of the most delightful sets of almshouses in the country, and of these last many interesting examples remain of every period. An immense number, of course, have vanished, even in recent years, some few have been allowed to go to ruin; while others, originally of ancient foundation, were largely if not entirely rebuilt in Tudor, Jacobean, or Georgian days.

The examples selected for the purposes of illustration have been chosen more for their architectural or picturesque qualities than for any purely archæological or historical interest they may possess, although their claims in the latter respect have not been entirely neglected. The author does not claim for this volume that it is exhaustive either with regard to letterpress or illustrations, but he ventures to suggest that it will be found to be fairly representative of almshouse and hospital exterior architecture, from the founding of St. John's Hospital, Canterbury, about the year 1084, to the building of the new wing at St. John's Hospital at Sherborne in 1866.

With two exceptions, St. Peter's Hospital, Bristol (originally a private residence), and Jesus Hospital, or the Bede-house, Lyddington (first erected as a palace for the Bishops of Lincoln), the whole of the foundations dealt with in the following pages were erected as almshouses or as hospitals.

The author wishes to take this opportunity of thanking the Masters of these old houses of alms, and his numerous correspondents, who have so readily furnished him with any information in their possession, particularly Mr. Jethro Cossins, the well-known architect and antiquary of Birmingham, and Mr. Herbert Batsford, of the eminent publishing firm of that name.

PREFACE—*continued.*

In a special manner are his thanks due to the Editor of *The Builder* for permission to issue this volume of illustrations after a shorter interval than is usual. All the descriptive notes that accompany each drawing have been carefully revised, and have, in many instances, received large additions.

The principal authorities consulted, apart from local guide books and monographs too numerous to mention, were the great *Monasticon*s of Tanner, Dugdale, and Oliver; Dollman's *Ancient Domestic Architecture*; the *Dictionary of National Biography*; the old county histories of Dugdale, Hoare, Hutchins, Hasted, etc.; the new *Victoria County Histories*; Fry's *Guide to the London Charities*; the published Reports of the last Charity Commission; the Transactions of our numerous county and other Archæological Societies; and last, but by no means least, Miss Rotha Mary Clay's *Mediæval Hospitals of England*, to which attention has already been called.

In conclusion the author would ask his readers' indulgence with regard to the dates given in the following pages. Except in a comparatively few instances, where definite dates figure on the buildings themselves, or are given in some contemporary document, it is impossible to be immaculate in chronology. This being so the reader is asked to remember that, in the majority of cases, the dates given throughout this volume are *approximate only*.

Upwey, Dorset.

August, 1910.



Almshouses at Lyford Berks

INTRODUCTION

The remarkable outflow of benevolence that marked the earliest days of Christianity led almost immediately to a care for the poor, especially in times of sickness or distress. From early times also the funds of the Church were applied to the maintenance of widows and orphans, sick and poor, and it was the especial duty of deacons and deaconesses to wait on the sick in their homes.

Public hospitals for the reception of the sick, infirm, old, and needy, began to be erected as soon as Christianity, freed from persecution, could give material expression to its charitable impulses with impunity. Houses were set apart for the reception of lepers, travellers, pilgrims, destitute people, foundlings, and the aged.

It is not necessary for us to go through the long list of such charitable institutions, erected for the benefit of the less fortunate members of the community under the auspices of the Church from their first appearance in Christendom, but by the so-called Arabic canons of Nicæa, the bishop was expressly bound, in virtue of his office, to institute hospitals. Canon 70 prescribes that in every city a place should be set

Old English Houses of Alms

apart for strangers, sick and poor, which should be called a *xenodochium*, and that the bishop should select one of the monks of the desert, himself a foreigner, far from home and family, and a man of integrity, to take charge of the hospital, to procure for it beds, and whatever may be necessary for the sick and poor ; and that if the property of the hospital should be inadequate, he should make a collection from the Christians, according to their several means, and with this provision sustain the brethren who are strangers, poor, or sick, as each may have need.

The earliest hospitals belonged naturally to the Eastern Church, but the Western Christians were not long in following in the footsteps of their Eastern contemporaries. Rome itself quickly gained notoriety for its care of the sick and poor, and its hospitals were often the objects of Papal munificence. With this example before them the Christians of Gaul and Italy erected large numbers of these benevolent and useful institutions.

The Teutonic countries cannot show any foundations of the same antiquity as those above mentioned, although the Synod of Aix, in 816, ordered that every ecclesiastical foundation, whether canonical or monastic, should provide for the poor, the sick, the widows, and the strangers. Such poor-house was to be placed near the Church, and a priest was to be its superintendent ; the infirmary was to be within the convent, as were also the wards for the widows and poor maidens.

The establishment of many hospitals in the northern countries during the 8th and 9th centuries, was due in a large measure to the efforts of the Irish missionaries, who, caring as much for the welfare of the bodies of their converts, as for their souls, received the name of *Hospitalia Scotorum*. These hospitals were always closely connected with the religious houses founded by these early missionaries, but practically no architectural remains have survived. During early days, and, indeed, until the Reformation, hospitals and almshouses attached to religious houses, were, like all the other institutions of the Church, directly controlled by the episcopate. The sums of money and other endowments of pious benefactors were placed under the control of the bishop, and so came within the jurisdiction of the Church. These donations and bequests were generally regarded in the nature of alms¹ in the days when the more wealthy members of the

¹ The alms of pilgrims and travellers, no doubt, helped to fill the coffers of many hospitals.

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community, and even the king himself, were in the habit of compounding for their sins by alms, an idea which was strengthened, even, indeed, if it did not originate, in the custom of the Church by which the imposition of alms was regarded as a means of penance. The introduction of this practice is attributed to Theodore of Canterbury, A.D. 700, and it was a practice much abused, as one would imagine, by those who were in a position to redeem their penances with gold.

There is abundant evidence to show that the property of hospitals was regarded by the Crown as forming part of the property of the Church, and those in attendance on the inmates were drawn almost without exception from adjacent monasteries or canonries.

Miss Clay sums up in a single paragraph the relationships that existed between these charitable institutions, the Church and the State. "The hospital was a semi-independent institution, subject to royal and episcopal control in matters of constitution, jurisdiction, and finance, yet less trammelled in organization than most religious houses. It formed a part of the parochial system, and had also links of one kind and another with monastic life."

The rules of conduct drawn up for the regulation of hospitals were of an essentially monastic character, and the special office of *Eleemosynarius*, or *Almoner*, which at first was given to one who merely distributed alms in monasteries and hospitals, became in due course the title of the Superintendent, Warden, or Master.

The *Hospitium* was the place where travellers and strangers were entertained within the monastery itself. None were refused admission, all were to be made welcome, especially monks, clergy, poor, and foreigners. No one was to be questioned except by direct order of the Abbot. Even passing wayfarers were pressed to eat before continuing their journey, and should they not have time to wait for the common meal, food was specially prepared for them. They were to be met by the prior or his delegate, and after a few words of prayer by way of salutation, the kiss of peace was given and received. Some such form of hospitality was imperative in the days when travelling was attended by so much difficulty and danger.

St. Benedict, in his *Rule*, says, "Before all things, and above all things, special care must be taken of the sick, so that they be served in very deed, as Christ Himself, for

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He saith: 'I was sick, and ye visited Me'; and, 'What ye did to one of these My least Brethren ye did it to Me.'"

Cassian speaks of one of the older monks being stationed by the Abbot near the entrance of the monastery to welcome the strangers as they arrived, and St. Benedict placed them under the general supervision of the cellarer, or house-steward. Subsequently a special office was appointed with the title "*hospitalarius*."

Every precaution was taken that the influx of strangers should neither disturb the placidity of the "House of God," nor lead to the propagation of mischievous rumours about it. None of the monks might exchange a word with a guest, except to ask a blessing. Part of the discipline of candidates for the *novitiate* consisted in their being deputed to wait upon the guests in their sitting-rooms (*cella hospitium*). History shows how the simple hospitality, enjoined by Benedict and his contemporaries, degenerated into luxury and display, demoralising to monks and laymen, impoverishing the funds and endowments, and one of the causes of the ultimate fall of religious houses.

In early times the hospital was a guest-house, religious house, and infirmary under one roof; but in later days when these charitable institutions were erected mainly as retreats for the destitute and the aged, they were given such various appellations as "Maison Dieu," "Bede-house," "God's House" as well as the more familiar "Hospital," and "Alms-house;" which two last terms were applied indiscriminately. Generally considered, however, there is a slight distinction, if not a difference between an "Alms-house" and a "Hospital," for whereas the former usually consists of a set of buildings made up of separate tenements between which there is no interior communication, the latter is entered by a common gateway, and possesses one or more rooms common to the community. The difference is something akin to that existing between what is now called a "collegiate" and a "cottage" system of housing. Both almshouses and hospitals were provided with chapels, and the two forms of charity were developed synchronously. The two systems, working side by side can be studied to great advantage at St. Cross Hospital, Winchester, where we have the "collegiate" system in the hospital founded by de Blois, and the "cottage" arrangement in the "Almshouses of Noble Poverty," a later benefaction of Cardinal Beaufort. Although the "Hospital," and the "Alms-houses" have been amalgamated for the purposes of administration they are quite distinct foundations.

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Occasionally one finds the term "hospital" given to a charitable institution that was largely, if not entirely, educational in its scope and purposes, as Heriot's Hospital, Edinburgh; Christ's Hospital, London (now removed to West Horsham); and that fine piece of mediæval architecture, Chetham Hospital, Manchester. In the same way the term "College" was sometimes applied to an almshouse, as Cure's College at Southwark, Sackville College, East Grinstead; Bromley College, Morden College, etc.

In this connection mention may be made that Eton College was founded as a school *and an almshouse*. This may be news to many, yet such is the fact, for "The King's College or Our Lady of Eton beside Windsor," was founded by Charter on 11th October, 1440, and created a corporation capable of holding property in perpetuity. It was to consist of a provost, ten fellows, four clerks, six choristers, a schoolmaster, twenty-five poor scholars, and a like number of "poor infirm men." The original foundation was to have combined the characteristics of a college of secular priests, an eleemosynary school, and an almshouse. Part of the revenues of Eton College at the present day come from about a hundred acres of land near Primrose Hill, which, like a good deal of the land it formerly held, had formed part of the possessions of the leper hospital of St. James in Westminster Fields, which had been granted to the college by its founder, Henry VI. The derivations of the terms, hospital, hospice, almshouse, Domus, Dei, etc., are so obvious as to require no comment. The meaning of the term "Bede" house is probably not so familiar. The word Bede means literally *prayer*. Thus a Bedehouse is a house of prayer, and a Bedeman a man of prayer. From Bede (prayer), the name was transferred to the small globular bodies used for "telling beads," or counting prayers. The Bede folk were those who prayed for a benefactor, and the Bedehouse was essentially a house of prayer and only incidentally an almshouse. Prayer for the souls of the founder was the *raison d'être* of all Bedehouses, for, uncharitable as it may be to say so, many people founded these houses more with the object of providing their soul's welfare with a permanent and continuous stream of intercessors, than to relieve the poor; under the impression no doubt that charity covers a multitude of sins. Curiously enough the place-name *Bettws*, as found in Bettws-y-Coed, is the Welsh equivalent of our English *Bede*, *i.e.* prayer.

In addition to the hospitals and almshouses founded by the Church or private benefactors in pre-Reformation days for the poor and aged, we shall find that the earliest institutions

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of which we have any definite records were mostly founded for the relief of lepers, and, when this disease died out, were in many cases adapted to the housing of the poor. The sites of some of these old hospitals is commemorated in the word Spital, an obvious corruption of hospital, as Elsing Spittle, near Cripplegate; Spitalfields, Spitalgate; while another form of commemorative place-name is that contained in Burton Lazars, Leics.

How, or at what time leprosy gained its great hold in England is not known. Some trace its origin from Egypt during the 10th century; others state that it was introduced here by the returning Crusaders, notwithstanding that Syria was singularly free from this scourge at the time of the Crusades. It has also been suggested that it was brought to our shores by the Danes and Northmen who so freely ravaged the country. Whatever its origin, there is no doubt that the disease (whether true leprosy or not is a question that can be left to the medical experts) was very rife in England for many years, probably for centuries before the first Crusade. The known existence of leper-hospitals and lazarehouses, like St. Nicholas' Hospital, Harbledown, founded at least ten years before the first Crusade, is proof that however much they may have spread the disease over Europe, the introduction of it here is one of the few sins perhaps that the "Saint Terres" or saunterers of the romantic Crusades did not commit. Leprosy is not mentioned in any Saxon document with which the author is familiar, but reference to it occurs in the *Ancren Riewle* of Richard Poore, Bishop of Salisbury, 1217-28.

Whatever the origin of the disease the position of outcast lepers was pitiable in the extreme. None would receive them; they were stoned in the streets, and generally regarded with horror and loathing. The efforts of the Church, and the erection of lazarehouses on the outskirts of the towns helped to alleviate their sufferings; while the records of the mercy of Jesus to lepers in the Gospels, would draw the attention of the charitable to them as special objects of compassion, with the result that some of the noblest and most richly endowed foundations in the country were erected for the relief of lepers.

The laws and enactments passed at various times, providing for these unfortunates, and guarding against the spread of the disease, make it clear that the leper was well cared for by the legislature. Infected persons were gradually removed from the monastic infirmaries and lodged in isolated lazarehouses. At first they were allowed to beg corn and food in the market places, but their public appearances caused such offence to the healthy members of the community, that alms were collected on their behalf by proctors, who,

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armed with a collecting box, were allowed to visit, on one day a month, monastic and other churches during the hours of service. It is thought that this custom is the origin of the later practice of collecting briefs in churches for the sufferers by a fire, flood, or some other great calamity. Many records exist relating to the collecting of alms for lepers. In 1163, Bishop Bartholomew Iscanus, of Exeter, granted to the infected people of the leper hospital of St. Mary Magdalene in that city, liberty to collect a toll on all corn and bread sold in the fairs and markets, and also to collect alms from door to door on certain days of the week. Jenkin's records in his *History of Exeter*, that "a certain Richard Orange, Esq., a gentleman of noble parentage, submitted himself to a residence in this hospital (St. Mary Magdalene), where he lived many years, and was buried in the chancel of the Chapel."

As late as the reign of Edward VI. large numbers of lepers were still in England, for in Ed. 6, c. 3, directions are given for carrying the poor to the places where they were born, "provided always that all *leprous* and poor bed-ridden creatures may, at their liberty, remain and continue in such houses, appointed for lepers, as they now be in." Miss Clay (*Mediæval Hospitals of England*), records the collecting of a toll for lepers at Maiden Bradley, where the leprous women and their prior held a weekly fair; and at Newbury, where, according to a charter of 1215, the collected proceeds are even to this day divided among the almsmen of St. Bartholomew's Hospital. Contemporary representations of lepers are found on the hospital seals of Sherburn, (Durham), Lincoln, and the Lazar-house, Mile End. So these old institutions continued, with varying fortunes, until the dissolution of the monasteries furnished an abundant incentive to this form of active benevolence, both living and posthumous; and however much they may have suffered during the years immediately following the dissolution of the religious houses, which had hitherto been their only mainstay in times of poverty and distress, the lot of the needy old folks during the succeeding centuries was not always an unenviable one. The bold bad baron, or the erring dame, were no longer able to settle matters with their consciences by donations to Mother Church, or the founding of Bedehouses. The Wars of the Roses had played terrible havoc with barons both good and bad, as well as with their possessions, but under the more settled government of the Tudors, and the encouragement they gave to commerce, the trading classes soon acquired both wealth and power. A great and mighty need arose, too, for on the monasteries and kindred institutions had devolved the

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care of the poor, and these gone, their only resources disappeared until such time as private or municipal enterprise provided them with all they had lost in the downfall of the religious houses.

The suppression of the monasteries resulted in immense tracts of land going out of cultivation, and laws were passed to arrest the depopulation of the country side. The coinage became debased, the guild lands, in reality the mediæval artisans' benefit funds, were confiscated. The poorer classes suffered terribly, for the monastic houses did for them all that our Poor Laws now do for their successors, and a great deal more.

The monks were, generally speaking, indulgent landlords and kind neighbours; they kept open house and daily provided meals for all comers. All this now vanished, and in place of the easy-going clerics, the landlords consisted of courtiers and royal favourites, who, once in possession of their ill-gotten gains, proceeded to squeeze the last penny out of their tenants. They held their estates with cruelty and exaction, and seized and enclosed the common lands. The transition therefore, from a religious to a private and semi-secular form of poor relief, was a period that brought untold misery and suffering to the poor, the sick, and the aged.

It would be absurd to affirm, as do a few writers on England's pre-Reformation ecclesiastical system, that these retreats were never used for mischievous purposes, or that the disposal of the revenues was always free from the imperfections and evils which belong to all such human institutions, even in the 20th century; yet it would be quite unworthy of the dignity of history to affect to undervalue the immense services which these foundations rendered to society at large, and to individuals in particular. If, in pursuit of corporate and private advantages, those in authority occasionally lapsed from the conditions of their trust, and preferred the individual to the general good, they did no more than all bodies of men have done when placed in similar positions; but whatever their personal interests and greed may from time to time have led them to do, we must remember that they constituted the only permanent mediating authority between the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, and that—to their eternal honour be it said—the wardens and masters of these foundations fully comprehended, and faithfully performed, for the most part, the arduous duties of their responsible offices.

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It is also beyond question that these and similar institutions of the Middle Ages, notwithstanding the frequent pilfering of the funds, and other excesses on the part of those in authority, had a gradual tendency to develop a more wholesome system of constitutional rights, and to lead in time to that limitation of absolute power—whether vested in individuals or general assemblies—which we have come to regard as the safest and most desirable form of civilised government. In fact, the history of our mediæval institutions furnishes the best illustration of the steps by which we have reached our present condition, and of the manner in which we have more or less profited in the endeavour to attain that conscientious, yet morally subdued condition of political freedom and purity of public life, on which we pride ourselves as a nation.

Turning from the general to the more particular purposes of this volume, we shall find that, interesting as are the earliest types of hospitals and almshouses to the ecclesiologist and the antiquary, it was during the 16th and 17th centuries that the material structure of these charities reached its highest architectural development. In 1509 Thomas Bond founded the Bablake Hospital at Coventry, and a year later Abbot Beere erected his fine almshouse at Glastonbury. William Smyth, in 1514, repaired and practically rebuilt the curious hospital of St. John in the city of Lichfield, over which he presided as Bishop. The great merchant princes of Tiverton, John Greenway and John Waldron, built, in 1517 and 1579 respectively, the beautiful almshouses still standing in this old Devonshire town. Jesus Hospital, Rothwell, the benefaction of a pious schoolmaster, was erected in 1591, and the building achievements of this century are fittingly epitomised in John Whitgift's princely gift of Trinity Hospital to his native place of Croydon, a building that Englishmen should ever revere and retain. In 1609, William Goddard founded Jesus Hospital, at Bray, and placed it under the care of the Fishmongers' Company, who still control it. To the year 1615 we owe Bishop Still's interesting addition to his predecessor Bubwith's Hospital at Wells; and that little cloistered building called "Napper's Mite," at Dorchester. Sackville College, East Grinstead, and George Abbot's stately hospital at Guildford, date from 1619, while to the same century we owe Lady Hungerford's delightful almshouses at Corsham, erected in 1668. Some of these homes are for men only, some for women only, while a few accommodate the poor of both sexes. At Wimborne the old hospital provides for three married couples, three single men, and three single women. In a few instances we find hospitals founded for special classes of

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unfortunates, as at Blackheath where Sir John Morden founded a College for decayed merchants. Sir Thomas Coningsby founded a hospital at Hereford, the master of which was, according to his original stipulations, always to bear the name of Coningsby.

There is little doubt that both the exterior and interior architecture of these charities, is of great suggestive value in regard to grouping of parts and general planning, while all of them are in a greater or lesser degree, worthy specimens of the diligent labour and fanciful imagination that is so characteristic of nearly all the Tudor, early Renaissance and Jacobean periods. If we examine the plans of these 16th and 17th century foundations, we shall find, almost without exception, that the component parts appertaining to nearly all of them consist of:—an audit room, a suite of rooms for the master or warden; an infirmary for the sick, a common hall; a suite of living rooms for the inmates; and a chapel, which last usually communicates directly with the secular buildings. In early types the chapel adjoins the hall from which it is separated by nothing more substantial than an open screen, thereby affording the sick and bedridden an opportunity of hearing the recital of the Church's offices, from which, had the chapel been a separate building, they would have been debarred. It is generally considered that this wise and thoughtful arrangement was adopted from the ancient monastic infirmaries. It is found with existing hospitals at Chichester, Higham Ferrers, Stamford, Wells and Glastonbury. Another form of building is where the dwelling rooms for the inmates are under one roof, but the chapel, although contiguous to them, is a distinct and separate building, as was the case at St. John's Hospital, Northampton; and yet another variety is that in which the chapel or church is connected with the main wings by an ambulatory or cloister, as at St. Cross Hospital, Winchester; at Ewelme; and at Cobham. At the old hospitals of Sherburn and Greatham, Durham, the church is not connected in any way with the secular buildings, while with the old leper hospital at Sandwich, the little Early English Chapel stands isolated in the midst of a public square, the various tenements of the almsfolk being grouped around it in little courts and byways.

A surprisingly large number of foundations have retained their ancient chapels, while in a few instances, as at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Oxford, the old chapel is the only architectural portion of the foundation that has survived. These hospital chapels have not yet received the attention they deserve at the hands of the ecclesiologist, for, in addition to a fair quantity of pre-Reformation fittings and furniture,

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the original stone altars may still be seen in hospital chapels at Ripon, Stamford, Greatham, Glastonbury, and Salisbury. One or two, the Greenway Almshouses, Tiverton, for example, still exhibit on their walls a plea to the passer-by to pray for the soul of the founder, a pious request that found little favour with the Parliamentary visitors of Reformation and Puritan days.

Good examples of the quadrangular type of hospital are found at S. Cross Ewelme, Higham Ferrers, Warwick, Croydon, and Bray. Appertaining to this type, but owing to the narrowness of its courtyard, classed quite by itself, is Ford's Hospital at Coventry.

Almshouses forming three sides of a quadrangle, the fourth side either left open or shut off by nothing more substantial than a wall, are at Temple Balsall, Abingdon, Lyford, and Heytesbury. Good straight rows of almshouses are those at Taunton, Stratford-on-Avon, Abingdon (Christ's), Lichfield, Hereford (Aubrey), and in many other places.

Picturesque little almshouses with a cloistered gallery or covered way along the front are those at Moretonhampstead, Dorchester, Barnstaple, and the Leper, or St. Margaret's Hospital, Taunton.

Good entrance gateways¹ are at St. Cross, and S. John's Hospitals, Winchester; Sexey's Hospital, Bruton; Jesus' Hospital, Rothwell; Beere's Almshouse, Glastonbury; and St. John's Hospital, Canterbury. It may not be uninteresting to call attention to the fact that although the great majority of almshouses and hospitals were planned and built expressly as houses of alms, there are several instances of buildings built for quite different purposes, being converted into residences for the poor. At the time of the Reformation the sale by the Crown, of some portion of a monastic or conventual house, to a person wishing to found an almshouse, was not uncommon. The old baronial hall of the Earls of Derby at Manchester—at the time of the dissolution a College of Secular Canons—was thus acquired by Sir Humphry Chetham, who founded the famous Chetham Hospital for boys, the magnificent buildings of which still remain. In much the same way Thomas Sutton became possessed of the old home of the

¹A fine Norman doorway brought from the Magdalene Hospital, Winchester, now forms the entrance to St. Peter's R.C. Church in that city.

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Carthusians (Charterhouse), and re-endowed it as Sutton's Hospital. St. Peter's Hospital, Bristol, and the Bedehouse, Lyddington, are other examples of buildings erected for totally different purposes, being converted into homes for the poor. When the Savoy Palace was destroyed by a drunken mob wreaking their vengeance on the Duke of Lancaster, the ruins were re-built and endowed by Henry VII., as the famous Savoy Hospital. After a chequered and unhappy career, what remained of the much pilfered funds of this foundation was made over to the, then, new hospital of Bridewell—afterwards a house of correction—which eventually became merged in King Edward VI.'s schools, now reformatory schools, at Southwark and Witley.

St. Katherine's Dock marks the site of the old hospital of St. Katherine, which, not so very long ago, stood where the waters of the Thames now flow. The great medical hospitals of Guy, St. Bartholomew, and St. Thomas, were originally hospitals in the non-medical meaning of that term, a remark that applies to several of the Oxford Colleges, which, if not exactly founded as almshouses, were incorporated with, and derived the nucleus of their funds from such institutions.

Founders' tombs or monuments are found in hospital chapels at Sandwich (Henry de Sandwich, lord warden of the Cinque Ports); St. Bartholomew's, Smithfield (Rahere); and St. Mark's, Bristol (Maurice de Gaunt). Monuments, brasses, or chantries, of hospital founders or co-founders are found among other places at Ewelme (Alice de la Pole); Cobham (Lady Margaret de Cobham, brass); Tiverton (John and Joan Greenway, brass; and John Waldron); Winchester Cathedral (de Blois and Cardinal Beaufort); Warwick (Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester); Milton Abbey (John Tregonwell); Bradford-on-Avon (John Hall, chantry); Salisbury Cathedral (Hungerford, restored chantry); Rothwell (Owen Ragdale); Canterbury Cathedral (Chichele¹ and Stephen Langton); Wimborne Minster (Gertrude Courtenay). Within the chancel rails of St. Cross' Hospital Church is a fine brass (1382), to John de Campeden, Master.

Probably the most beautiful monument of an almshouse founder or benefactor, with the exception of the tomb of Alice de la Pole at Ewelme, is that in the old priory church of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, to the memory of Sir John Crosby,

¹ The Fellows of All Souls College, Oxford, keep the tomb of Henry Chichele, the founder, in good repair.

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the builder of Crosby Hall—now unfortunately removed from its original site—and a great benefactor to London charities. This monument is without question one of the finest examples of monumental architecture we possess. The base of the tomb is of Purbeck marble, the figures of Sir John and his wife are of white alabaster, tricked out with colours.

Appropriately enough, on the opposite side of the chancel of the same historic church, is the monument of Sir Thomas Gresham, founder of the Royal Exchange and of Gresham College. This monument, however, is a very uninteresting affair, being a sarcophagus tomb with fluted ribs, its heavy appearance being somewhat redeemed by the exceptionally well-carved escutcheons.

In St. Saviour's Church, Southwark, is a mediæval recessed arch, converted in later times into a memorial to Thomas Cure, saddler to Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth. He was a great benefactor to Southwark, where he founded a kind of almshouse, with a warden and pensioners, called the "College." The book of statutes, drawn up by the founder, still exists. It contains injunctions against "begginge," "typplinge in howses," "swearynge and raylinge."

Cure also appears to have been one of the founders of St. Saviour's School. His epitaph, which is worth quoting, is a curious instance of Latin punning, and it is thought to have been the origin of an old song called *The Perfect Cure*.

"ELIZABETHA TIBI PRINCEPS, SERVIBIT EQUORUM
A SELLIS CURUS QUEM LAPIS ISTE TEGIT
SERVITI, EDWARDO REGI MARIÆ QUE SORORI
PRINCIPIBUS MAGNA EST LAUS PLACUISSE TRIBUS
CONVIXIT CUNCTUS CHARUS RESPUBLICA CURÆ
SEMPER ERAT CURO COMMODA PLEBIS ERANT
DUM VIXI TRIBUI SENIBUS ALENDIS
NUMMORUM IN SUMPTUS ANNA DONA DOMOS.
OBIIT 24 DIE MAII AN DOM 1588."

Effigies of founders, placed within niches or in some architecturally-treated recesses, are found on the exterior walls of Morden College, Blackheath (Sir John and

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Lady Morden) ; Jesus' Hospital, Bray (William Goddard) ; Sexey's Hospital, Bruton (Hugh Sexey); S. Cross' Hospital, Winchester (Cardinal Beaufort) ; and on Foster's Hospital, Bristol.

Contemporary portraits of founders or co-founders are those in St. John's Hospital, Winchester (Ralph Lambe); Abbots' Hospital, Guildford (George Abbot) ; and Christ's Hospital, Abingdon (Sir John Mason, and Edward VI.).

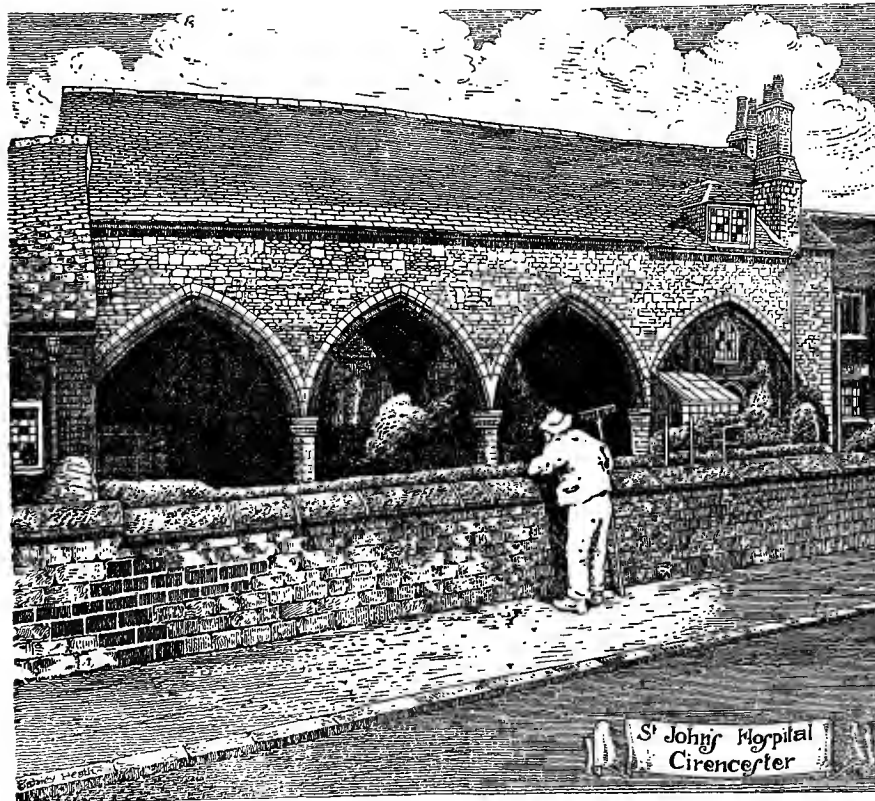
Ancient Alms boxes are preserved at St. Nicholas' Hospital, Harbledown, the Penrose Almshouses, Barnstaple, and at the "Domus Dei," Stamford.

Pessimists are never tired of asserting that every good action is inspired by a selfish motive, and that our rather vulgar modern custom of erecting stained glass windows, fonts, etc., presumably for the glorification of God, but obviously for the gratification of Jones, has many a mediæval precedent. We must, however, not allow a few instances of personal vanity to blind our eyes to the fact that the greater number of almshouse founders erected the material structure to promote the welfare of the poor rather than to perpetuate or gratify a sense of personal vanity. No group of buildings are, in their way, more charming, or more impregnated with human associations than the picturesque sets of almshouses that adorn so many of our cities, towns, and villages—asylums of peace and rest, comfort and repose, standing monuments to the memory of their founders, and the cause of heart-felt gratitude in the hearts of thousands of our needy old folk, now as in the past. Surely many an English town would be shorn of half its interest were its old houses of alms to be removed ; and as surely the general air of peace and quietude, the grassy plots, the benches and sundials, the heraldic insignia of founder or benefactor, all contribute in conveying to the receptive mind an appeal that is almost sacred in its simple eloquence. The touching inscriptions, carved on wall or gateway, are always appropriate and happy in expression, the lettering well spaced and sweetly cut.

This all too brief introduction to our Old English Houses of Alms may fittingly close with the delightful inscription cut on the wall of a small set of ancient almshouses at Bromham, in Wiltshire.

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I WAS HUNGRIE AND YEE
GAVE MEE MEATE. I WAS
THIRSTIE AND YEE GAVE MEE
DRINKE. I WAS NAKED AND
YEE CLOTHED MEE. I
WAS HARBARLES AND YEE
CAVE MEE LODGINGE. CUM
YEE BLESSED OF MY FATHER
INHERIT THE KINGDUM
PREPARED FOR YOU.
MAT 25,
ANNO CHRI 1612 ET
ANNO REG IAC REGIS
MAGN BRITTAN IO.



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St. John's Hospital, Canterbury

CIRCA 1084.

This ancient foundation is without question one of the earliest hospitals, properly so called, erected in this country. It was founded by Lanfranc about the year 1084, and has continued down to the present day as an asylum for the infirm poor. Its original purpose appears to have been the housing and care of poor, lame, infirm and blind men and women, the building being divided into two portions for this purpose. Nearly all the original buildings, which were of stone, were burnt down in the fourteenth century, with the exception of portions of the chapel, where traces of the old Norman building remain. Eadmer says in his *History*, "He (Lanfranc) built a fair and large house of stone, and added to it several habitations for the various needs and convenience of the men, together with an ample plot of ground."

Miss Clay¹ writes, "As Eadmer was living until 1124, he saw the hospital shortly after its erection. He may even have watched the Norman masons complete it, and the first infirm inhabitants take up their abode." There is no doubt that this hospital, like so many others in the vicinity of Canterbury, benefited greatly by the alms of pilgrims wending their way to the great shrine of Becket in the Cathedral hard by. In 1507 a complaint was made to the Archdeacon that the Mayor of Canterbury had carried off among other things the chalice, paten, and bells from the chapel, but the charge appears to have been unfounded. The foundation is now tenanted by aged men and women, the presentation being in the hand of the Archdeacon. As at Lanfranc's sister foundation at Harbledown, a number of ancient cooking utensils and other domestic objects of interest are preserved here.

The building is entered through a picturesque half-timbered gateway, the gables of which have carved and perforated barge-boards.

¹ The "Mediæval Hospitals of England."



St. Nicholas' Hospital, Harbledown

St. Nicholas' Hospital at Harbledown, situated on the London Road, one mile from Canterbury Cathedral, can justly claim to be one of the oldest foundations of its kind in the country. It was founded about 1084, for the relief of lepers, by Lanfranc, the Italian cleric brought by William I. from the Abbey of Bec, to be set at the head of the English Church. The fact that it was built ten years prior to the first Crusade is interesting, as throwing doubt on the generally accepted idea that leprosy was unknown in England until introduced here by the returning Crusaders. Lanfranc realised that only men of special gifts should be appointed to take charge of the lepers at Harbledown. Miss Clay tells us, "He not only arranged to supply all they might need on account of the nature of their illness," but appointed men to fulfil this work, "of whose skill, gentleness and patience no one could have any doubt."

The lepers at Harbledown were not allowed to wander about the roads without permission, though leave was granted them to visit sick friends or relations, or to go beyond the customary bounds for recreation or on useful business. On entering the hospital, the lepers were supplied with a russet-coloured dress; the brethren wore scapulars, or the ordinary working dress of a monk, and the sisters wore mantles. Both men and women wore ox-hide boots reaching mid-way up the leg. On their heads the men wore hoods, while the women used thick veils.

In 1276 the voluntary offerings had dwindled to such an extent that it was with great difficulty that the inmates were able to provide themselves with sufficient food. Miss Clay says, "When funds were low at Harbledown, the Archbishop impropriated Reculver church, thus augmenting the income by parochial tithes." This disgusted the parishioners, who sought redress, thinking it "ill to be subject to lepers."

It is probable that the site of Harbledown Hospital was chosen by Lanfranc on account of the proximity of a well of medicinal waters which were thought to be efficacious in cases of leprosy. Medicinal wells were found also at Burton Lazars, Peterborough, Newark and Nantwich, which may account for the sites of the hospitals at these places.

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The well at Harbledown is commonly called the Black Prince's well, according to the popular tradition that water from it was sent to the hero of Poitiers when on his death-bed at Canterbury. This tradition is unsupported by evidence, while the fact that the Black Prince did not die at Canterbury, is entirely against the theory. It may, however, be connected with the Prince in another way, for after the battle above referred to, the Prince and his prisoner, King John of France, passed through Harbledown (April 19th, 1357) on their way to Canterbury and London. Halting at the Hospital, they would doubtless be offered the relics to kiss, and would probably drink a cup of water from the holy well. If such were the case, it can easily be understood that the spring might ever afterwards be known as the Black Prince's well. Be this as it may, the key-stone of the semi-circular arch above it, bears in somewhat deep carving, the well-known cognisance of the Prince, the three feathers, and the motto, "*Ich Dien*," but there is no evidence to show when the stone was inserted.

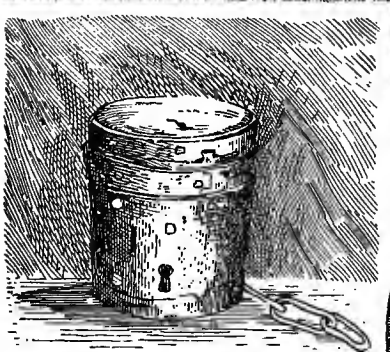
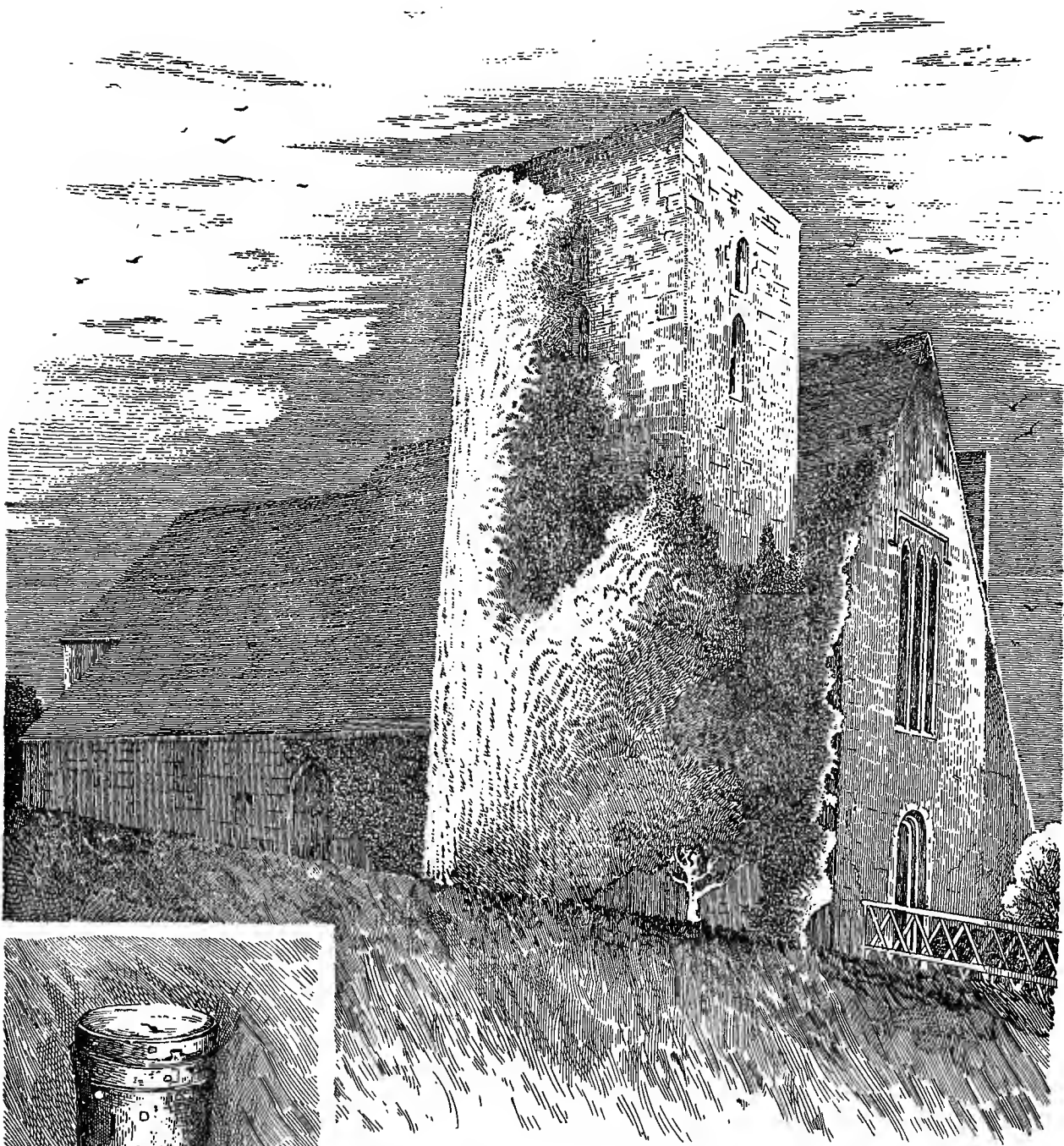
The existing structure, although partly rebuilt with brick in the reign of James II., contains a considerable portion of the original Norman building, while the walls of the interior are covered with a number of old fresco paintings. A curious feature of the Church is the downward slope of the floor from the altar to the west doorway. This was unquestionably designed to drain off the water with which the church was flooded after the lepers had attended mass. The same thing is observable at Shaftesbury, and in many of those churches that were built to accommodate large bodies of pilgrims. In many of the churches the pilgrims, with clothing, feet, and bodies covered with the dust and filth of the journey, would spend the whole night before the hallowed shrine or saintly relic, with the consequence that the necessity arose of devising some simple means of flushing the floor with water. The old seats and benches at Harbledown, dating from the thirteenth century, are also worthy of attention.

Some interesting relics are preserved in the building, including the famous "Erasmus" money or alms box, of which tradition gives the following account. When Erasmus visited the hospital in the company of Dean Colet, one of the brethren presented a holy relic for the travellers to kiss before being sprinkled with holy water. The relic was the portion of a shoe once worn by St. Thomas of Canterbury. The dean declined the proffered favour with such an outburst of wrathful rhetoric, that the courteous

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Erasmus must needs make amends, and appease the astonished brother by dropping a goodly donation into the box, at that time fastened by a chain, of which a few links remain, to a tree near the hospital gate, or at the end of a long pole, so that the passer-by might give his donation at a safe distance from the infected lepers. Other relics to be seen are some good "London" marked pewter plates and tankards, a set of wooden trenchers, and a maple mazar, or drinking cup, with a silver-gilt relief, whereon the carver has engraved the combat of Guy, Earl of Warwick, with a dragon.





The Erasmus Money Box

St Nicholas Hospital, Warbledown
— Sidney Heath

St. John's Hospital, Northampton

CIRCA 1200.

Leland tells us that this hospital, dedicated in the name of S. John the Baptist, and formerly in the patronage of the Bishop of Lincoln, was founded by William Sancte Clere, or S. Liz, Archdeacon of Northamptonshire. By an inquisition, however, taken in the first year of Edward III.'s reign (1327), it is there stated to have been founded nearly two centuries before that date by Walter, Archdeacon of the same county, for the reception and maintenance of infirm poor. The solution of the mystery is rendered even more difficult by the fact that in the recorded list of Northampton's Archdeacons, no mention is made of Walter, but the name of one William occurs as possessed of that title at the period of his death in 1168, and he may be the William Sancte Clere above mentioned. Bridges, the historian of Northants, states that "the government of this hospital is vested in a master and two co-brothers or chaplains. The master appoints the brothers, and is himself appointed by the Bishop of Lincoln. The hospital consists of a chapel, a hall or common room, with lodgings for the poor, and two rooms over them for the co-brothers. The master hath a good house and garden. The co-brothers, who officiate as chaplains, are in holy orders, but it is not required that the master be a clergyman. The co-brothers' salaries are £5 each, with 11s. each in lieu of firewood, and 10s. on the renewal of leases. Eight poor people, appointed by the master, are maintained here with lodging, firing in the common hall, and an allowance of 1s. 2d. weekly. Lord Northampton pays annually, by agreement, £10 instead of wood, out of Yardley chase."

The further revenues of the foundation came from rents and property in several parishes of the county and elsewhere, and by a survey taken in the twenty-sixth year of Henry VIII. (1535), the revenue, clear of all deductions for upkeep, salaries, and pensions, is returned at £57 19s. 6d.; by a subsequent estimate made some seven years later, the taxation of the income was reduced to £25 6s. 2¾d.

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The plan of the building consists of a common hall, with a central passage, on each side of which were the rooms or cubicles of the residents, being in this respect similar but not exactly corresponding to the examples at S. Mary's Hospital, Chichester, the Bede house at Higham Ferrers, Browne's Hospital, Stamford, and others, to which attention has been called in the introduction.

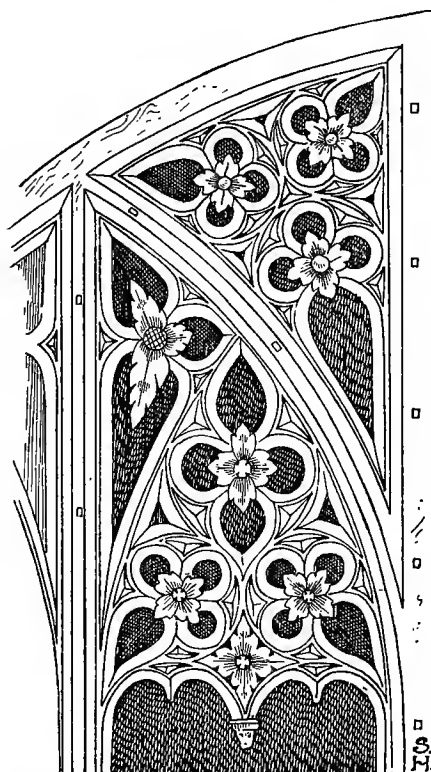
The difference is that although the chapel stands at the N.E. angle of the main apartment, it is not approached from within the latter, the entrance being external, and on the south side.

About half-way in the length of the common hall is a staircase leading to two rooms above, originally allotted to the co-brothers. The chapel has an east window of three lights, and is a good example of Middle Pointed intersecting tracery, the west window of five lights being Perpendicular, and four-centred. Under this window is a doorway of the same date, embellished with some excellent carving (see illustration). Of this chapel Bridges writes:—"In the windows are some imperfect coats of arms and broken figures, and in one window the entire portrait of a person mitred, with a crosier in his hand, and of another in the posture of prayer. In several places of the east window, in black letters, is HONOR DEO." Many of the masters were buried in this chapel, together with some knights and others who were slain at the battle of Northampton, *temp* Henry VI. The chapel underwent a much needed renovation about 1850, when the wooden bell-cot over the west gable, the seats and communion table, and the enclosure wall and entrance gates were erected.

The master's house was an exception to the general rule, in that it stood in a garden away from the hospital. The building shows a few fragments of 13th century work, including the original roof and a small lancet window, the remaining portion being mainly of 16th century date. A full account and plan of this building, with illustrations of the two early features to which attention has been called, will be found in Turner's *Domestic Architecture of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, vol. I. p. 156.

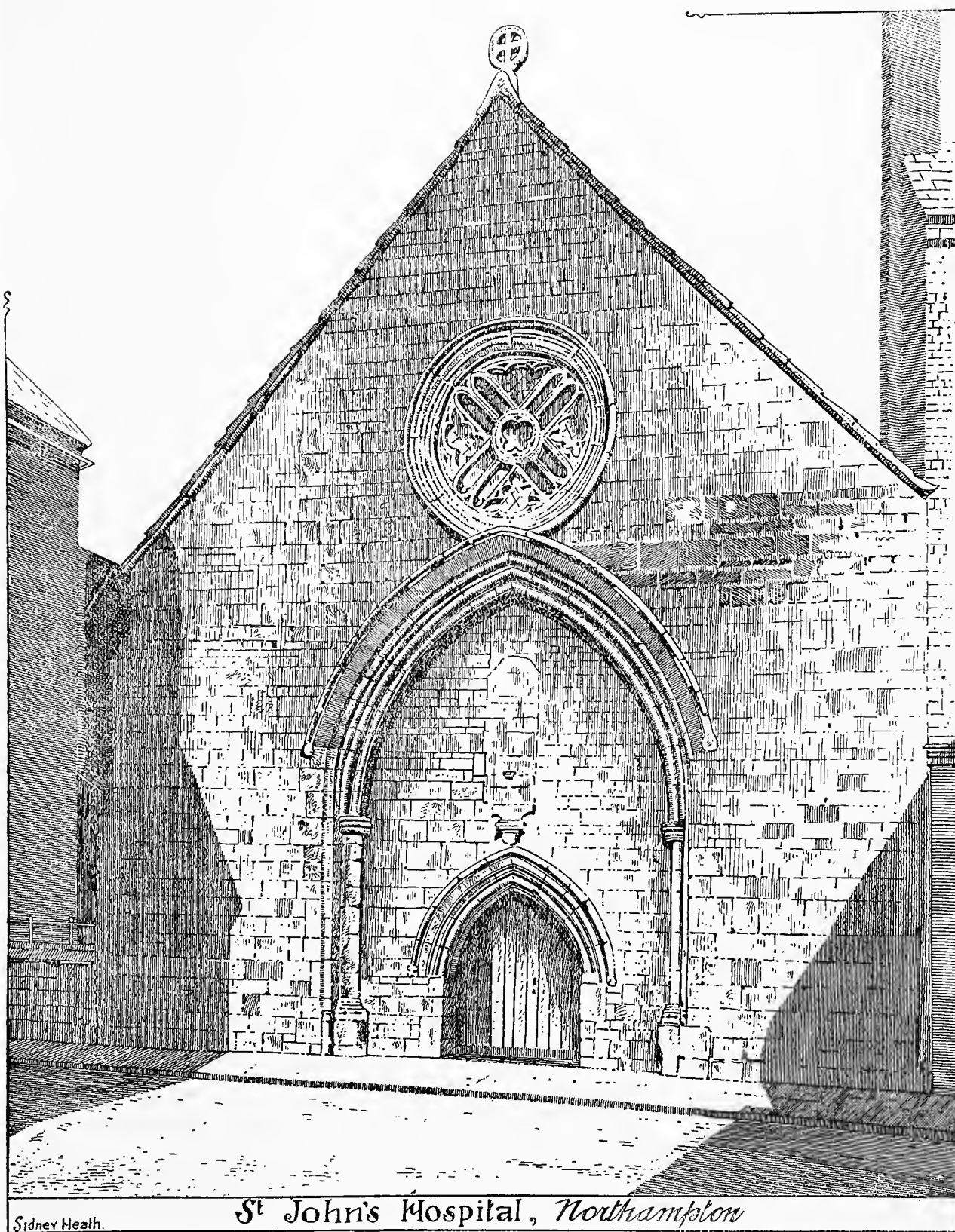
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Externally, the architecture is unusual. The principal front (see plate) consists of a large arched recess, in which originally was a niche ; and a low doorway. The gable is pierced by a circular window, the tracery of which is of very unusual design, and one that the author has never met with elsewhere. The gable cross is quite modern. This building, unfortunately, is no longer fulfilling the charitable purposes for which it



*Tracery on West Door of Chapel,
St. John's Hospital Northampton.*

was erected, for after the peculations of successive masters during the 17th and 18th centuries, the funds practically vanished, and the building became neglected, and so remain, until it was acquired by the Roman Catholic community for their place of worship, being consecrated as such by the late Cardinal Manning. This will ensure the preservation of the chapel, and, one trusts, of the secular hall as well, for at the present moment this serves no nobler purpose than that of providing a residence for the caretaker.



St John's Hospital, Northampton

St. Mary's Hospital, Chichester

CIRCA 1229.

St. Mary's Hospital, at Chichester, is a foundation of great interest, and one that is said to have been founded by William, fifth dean of Chichester (*temp* Henry II.) for the reception of nuns ; but its early history is very obscure. In 1229 it was first recognised as the Hospital of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for the maintenance of a warden, chaplain, and thirteen poor persons. Besides the regular inmates, arrangement was made for poor travellers to be taken in and well cared for on seeking admission. A statute of the Hospital enacted that "if anyone in infirm health and destitute of friends should seek admission for a term, until he shall recover, let him be gladly received and assigned a bed."

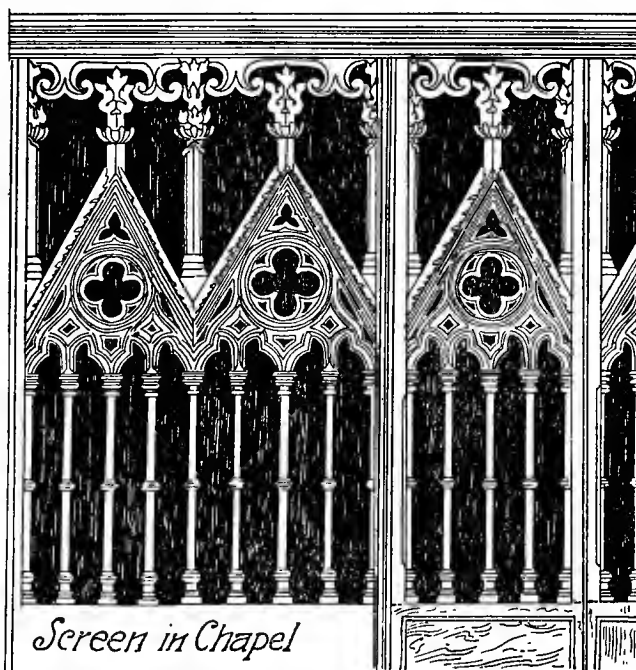
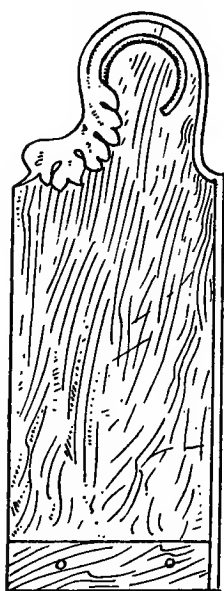
Its final constitution was settled under Elizabeth in 1562, when it was limited to a warden and five inmates, to which number three have been added in recent times.

St. Mary's at Chichester is the finest remaining example of the old infirmary type of almshouse. The hall is divided from the chapel only by a good Decorated screen, so that the sick or bedridden could lie in their beds along the sides of the hall and attend to the services conveniently. The great hall of four bays has a fine timber roof extending in one span over the entire building, and is subdivided into a species of nave and aisles by wooden pillars supporting the roof. These aisles in 1860 were divided into rooms or cabins for the inmates.

The chapel is almost entirely of the Geometric-Decorated period ; the screen (with the exception of the upper part, which shows signs of a Jacobean restoration), and all the woodwork is of the same date. The piscina is canopied with trefoil-headed tracery in the arch, and over the sedilia is some very beautiful cusped tracery. The old stalls and misereres are also well worthy of attention.



Bench End in Chapel



Screen in Chapel

*S^t Mary's
Hospital
Chichester*

Sidney Heath.

St. Margaret's Hospital, Wimborne

1241.

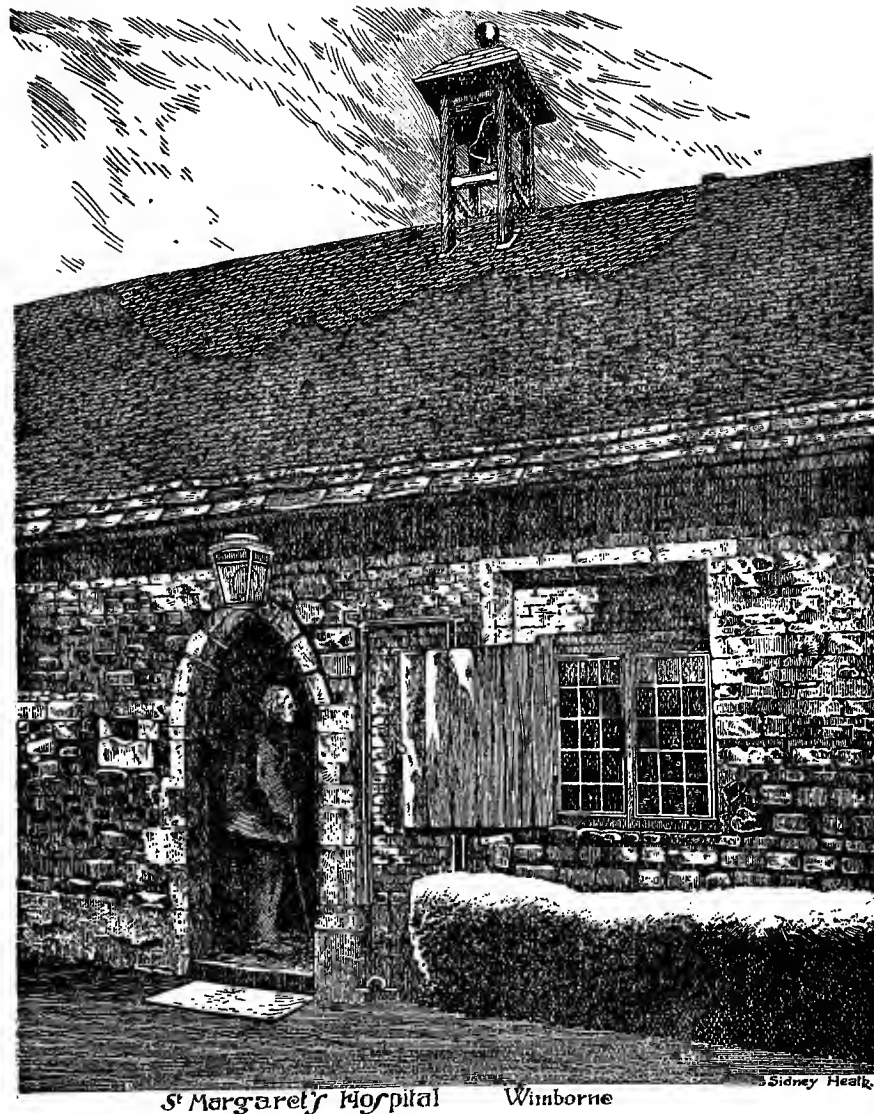
Like so many of our really old charitable institutions, St. Margaret's Hospital, situated a quarter of a mile to the north-west of Wimborne, appears to have been founded originally for lepers. Tradition gives John of Gaunt, son of Edward III., as the founder, but what slight documentary evidence exists, seems to indicate an early 13th century institution. The foundation was not one of the well-endowed, and it appears to have been largely, if not altogether, maintained, by the gifts of the charitable, who, in return, were granted various indulgencies, as is set forth in a deed dated XVI. Henry VIII., wherein we learn that

“Pope Innocent IV., in the year 1245, by an indulgence or bulle did assoyl them of all signs forgotten, and offences done against fader and moder, and all swerynges neglygently made. This indulgans, granted of Petyr and Powle, and of the said Pope, was to hold good for 51 years and 260 days, provided they repeated a certain specified number of Paternosters and Ave Marias daily.”

The chapel joins one of the tenements of the almsmen, and here comes one of the minster clergy every Thursday afternoon to conduct service. The interior has been refitted in recent years, but the windows, walls, etc., remain in their original state. There are three doors in the north wall, the doorways of which are chamfered and have pointed heads. The east window has a semi-circular head, plain wooden tracery dividing it into two lancets with an opening above them. On the south side some pointed doorways and lancet window help to determine, together with the deed already quoted, the 13th century origin of the building. Some traces of frescoes, both geometrical patterns and figures, remain on the inside walls. The roof is an open one of timber, with the beams running across at the level of the wall plates. To the left of the doorway selected for illustration will be seen a very good outside holy-water stoup, the surface of the stone having been worn into a deep hollow by contact with generations of hands. The only other outside stoup in Dorset with which the author is acquainted, is an equally good example in the wall of the side porch of Broadmayne Church, near Dorchester.

Old English Houses of Alms

The tenements attached to this little hospital are nine in number—three occupied by married couples, three by men and three by women. The walls of these dwellings are at present a mixture of stone, rubble, and modern brick. The old stone mullions have



St Margaret's Hospital

Wimborne

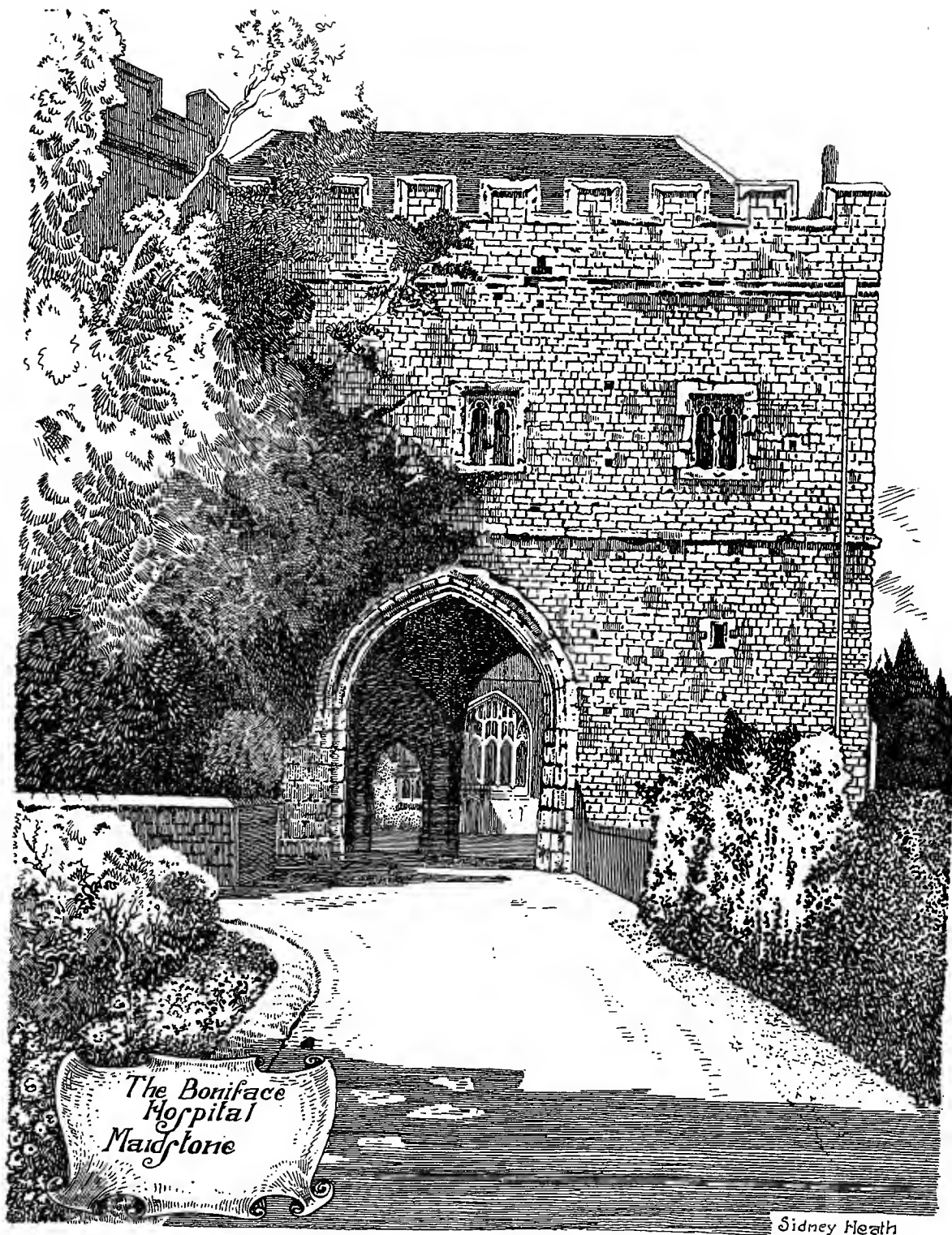
been pulled out for the insertion of more modern windows, but portions of the old framings remain, as do a few wooden door frames embedded in the walls, and one or two courses of the enormous slabs of stone that originally covered the roof.

The Boniface Hospital, Maidstone

1260—1395.

This ancient and interesting foundation, frequently called the Hospital of Newark (New Work), was founded in 1260 by Archbishop Boniface, for the reception of poor travellers, and in particular for such pilgrims as passed through Maidstone on their way to the shrine of the martyred Becket at Canterbury. The hospital chapel, after being used for many years as a storeroom, has been restored and again fitted for worship, as St. Peter's Church. It contains much good work of early Perpendicular date. In 1395 the old hospital was, by Archbishop Courtenay, incorporated with a college of Secular Priests ; and of this foundation the greater part is still standing. The college was dissolved *circa* 1538, the existing buildings being in private occupation.

These comprise a fine gateway (see illustration), a long range of rooms between it and the river, and a tower guarding the river approach. On the right of the gateway is the master's house; on the left a wing where was formerly the College bakehouse and other domestic offices. The corresponding wing containing the refectory and dormitories is now a school, and the massive tower by the river makes a delightful private residence, as also does the master's house, with its terraced gardens sloping to the Medway. No trace of the old cloisters remains. Above the main arch of the gateway is a fine apartment used by the local lodge of Freemasons.



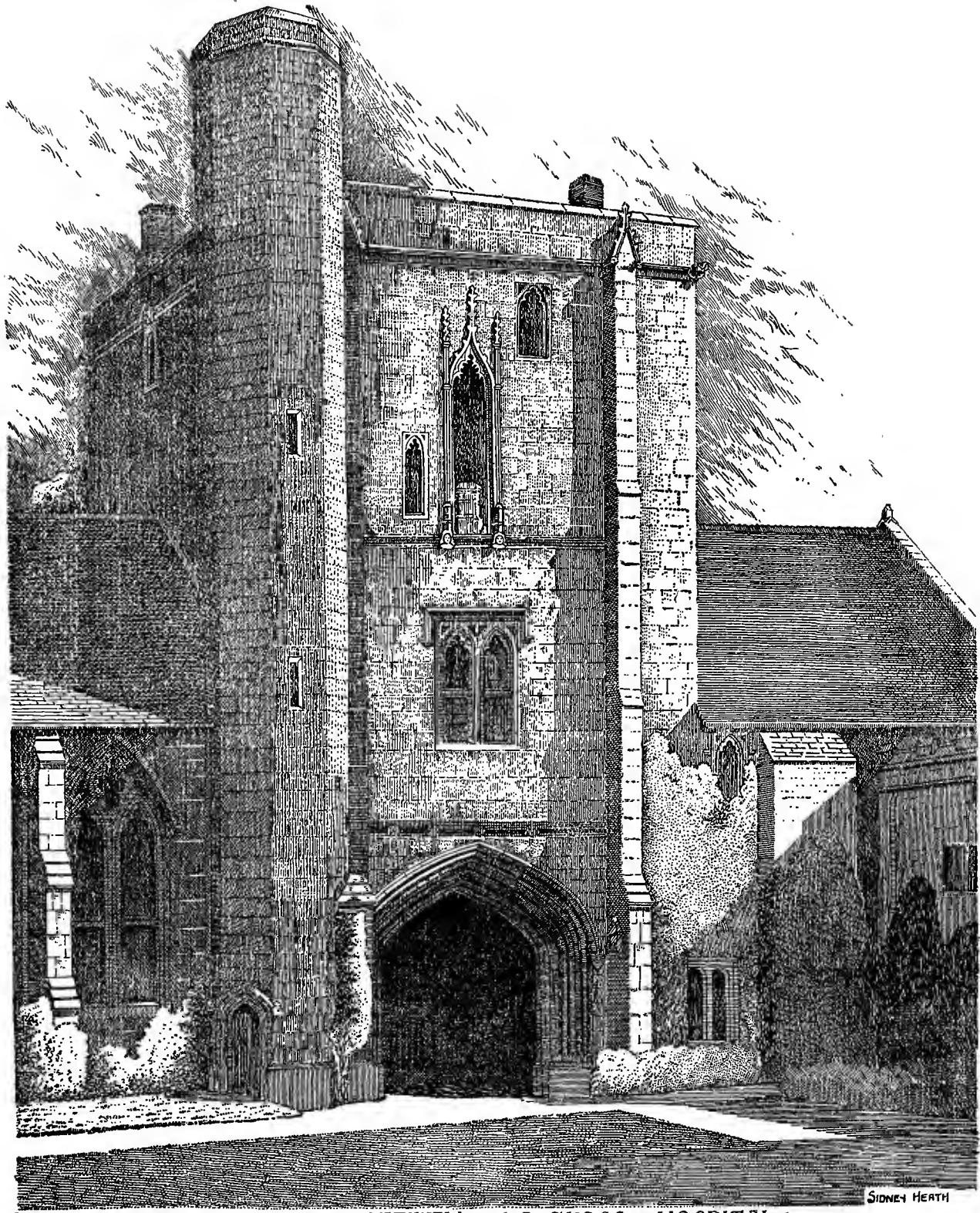
St. Cross Hospital, Winchester

1136.

The fine old Hospital of St. Cross, near Winchester, was founded in 1136, by Henry de Blois, Bishop of Winchester, but the following year the management of the foundation was given to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, who for some time appear to have had a difficulty in making good their claim to administer the charity.

In 1185 they surrendered the foundation to Bishop Toclyve, but two years later it was handed back to them by the Pope, a grant that was confirmed in 1189 by Richard I. Litigation, even then, did not cease, for in 1179 it was awarded to the Bishop of Winchester on appeal to the Pope. The Hospitallers, however, in 1199, once more gained possession of the buildings, to whom they were given by King John, but the following year saw the whole of the foundation assigned to the Bishop of Winchester. A survival of the Hospitallers' rule here is preserved in the badges (Crosses potent), worn by the pensioners, and it may be here mentioned that, on the death of one of the brothers, the Silver Cross is placed on a red velvet cushion, and laid on his breast in the coffin, but is removed before the burial takes place, and fastened by the master on the gown of the next comer.

The hospital buildings consist of an outer gateway and court, in which are the various domestic offices of the brotherhood. From the fore-court, through Cardinal Beaufort's noble gateway, one enters the spacious quadrangle, around which are arranged the brethren's dwellings, hall and church, while on the east side is the ambulatory with the infirmary above. The north side comprises the refectory and the master's house. The ambulatory, of sixteenth century date, is one hundred and thirty feet long. It possesses a good oriel window and simple spandrils to the supporting woodwork. By far the finest architectural feature of the secular portion of this quadrangle is the massive gateway, called the Beaufort Tower, after the famous Cardinal, who, if not the original builder, restored it in a very thorough manner (1404-47), and endowed it with that



THE BEAUFORT-GATEWAY 'S. CROSS HOSPITAL'

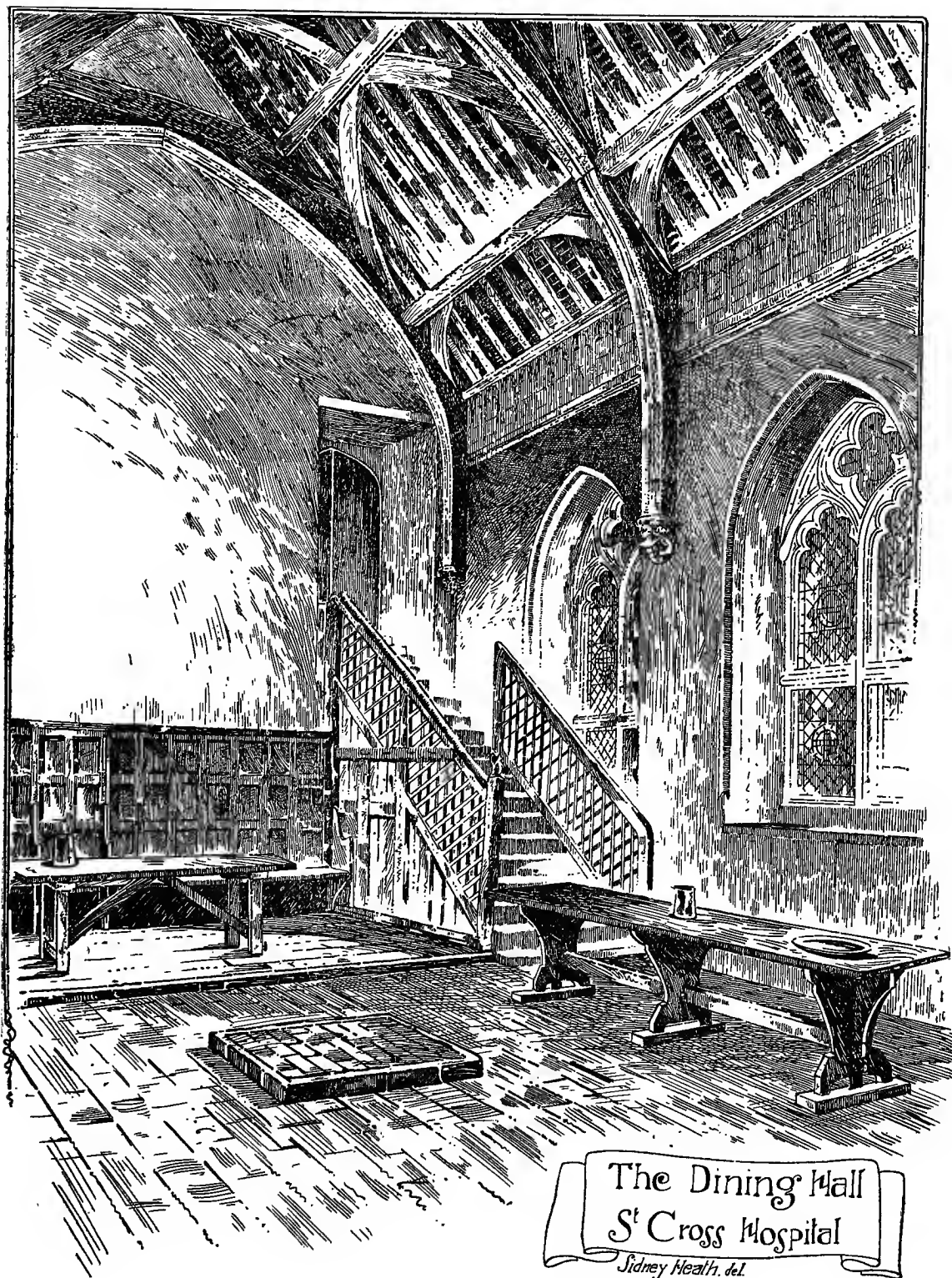
Old English Houses of Alms

architectural quality that gives it so distinguished a place in the building achievements of the fifteenth century.

Above the richly groined and vaulted ceiling of this gateway the external arch of which is four centred and well moulded, is the founder's chamber, lighted by a square-headed, transomed window, with cinquefoil tracery. This apartment is now used as a board-room by the hospital trustees, and here also the ancient documents relating to the foundation are preserved. Above this room the external wall carries a canopied niche, wherein one stood an effigy of the Blessed Virgin, who, falling from her pedestal about a century ago, nearly killed one of the brethren in her descent. The head of this broken figure may still be seen in the north choir aisle of the church. The north side of this gateway has three similar niches, only one of which has retained its effigy, that of the Cardinal in a kneeling posture. Within the gateway is the porter's hatchway, associated with the retention of that charitable custom of mediæval England by which the wayfarer, be he gentle, simple, beggar or noble, was entitled to a daily dole. The custom as at present carried out is but a relic and a faint echo of the times when a hundred poor men were fed every day in the great hall of the hospital. We are told also that the poorer scholars of Winchester College dined without fee in the "Hundred Men's Hall." The daily dole now consists of but two gallons of ale and two loaves of bread; the number of wayfarers who claim their portion of each, averages thirty a day.

Cardinal Beaufort also founded in 1446 the "Almshouses of Noble Poverty," but these dwellings, situated on the south side of the quadrangle, were pulled down in 1789. The existing brethren's houses to which the Cardinal is thought to have added the tall projecting chimney-shafts, are fashioned like those of the old Carthusians, each brother having two rooms, a pantry, and a garden.

The Brethren's Hall, or the "Hundred Mennes Hall" was re-roofed in 1334 by William de Edyndon. It is lighted by four XIVth century windows and contains a minstrel



The Dining Hall
St Cross Hospital

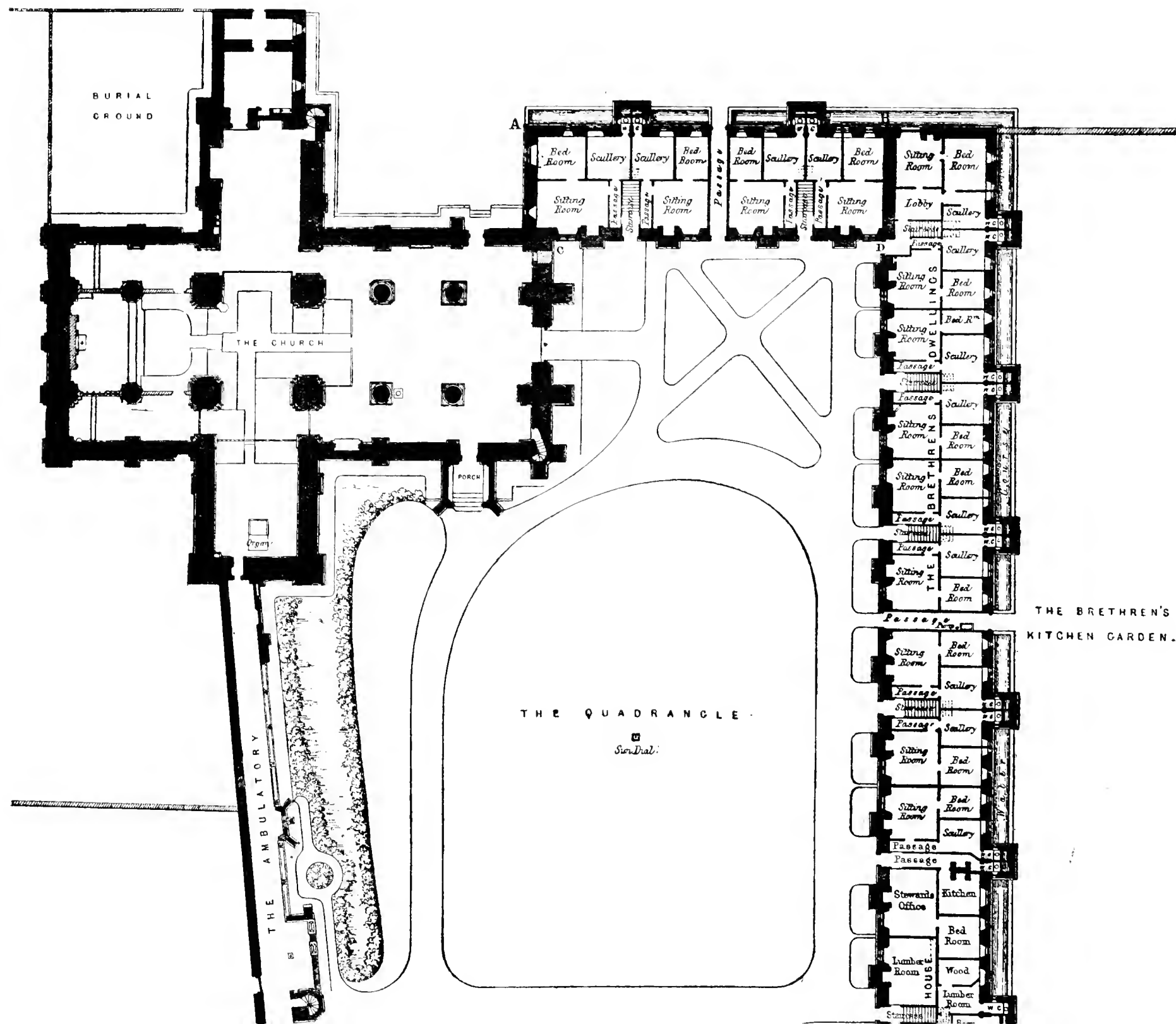
Sidney Heath, del.

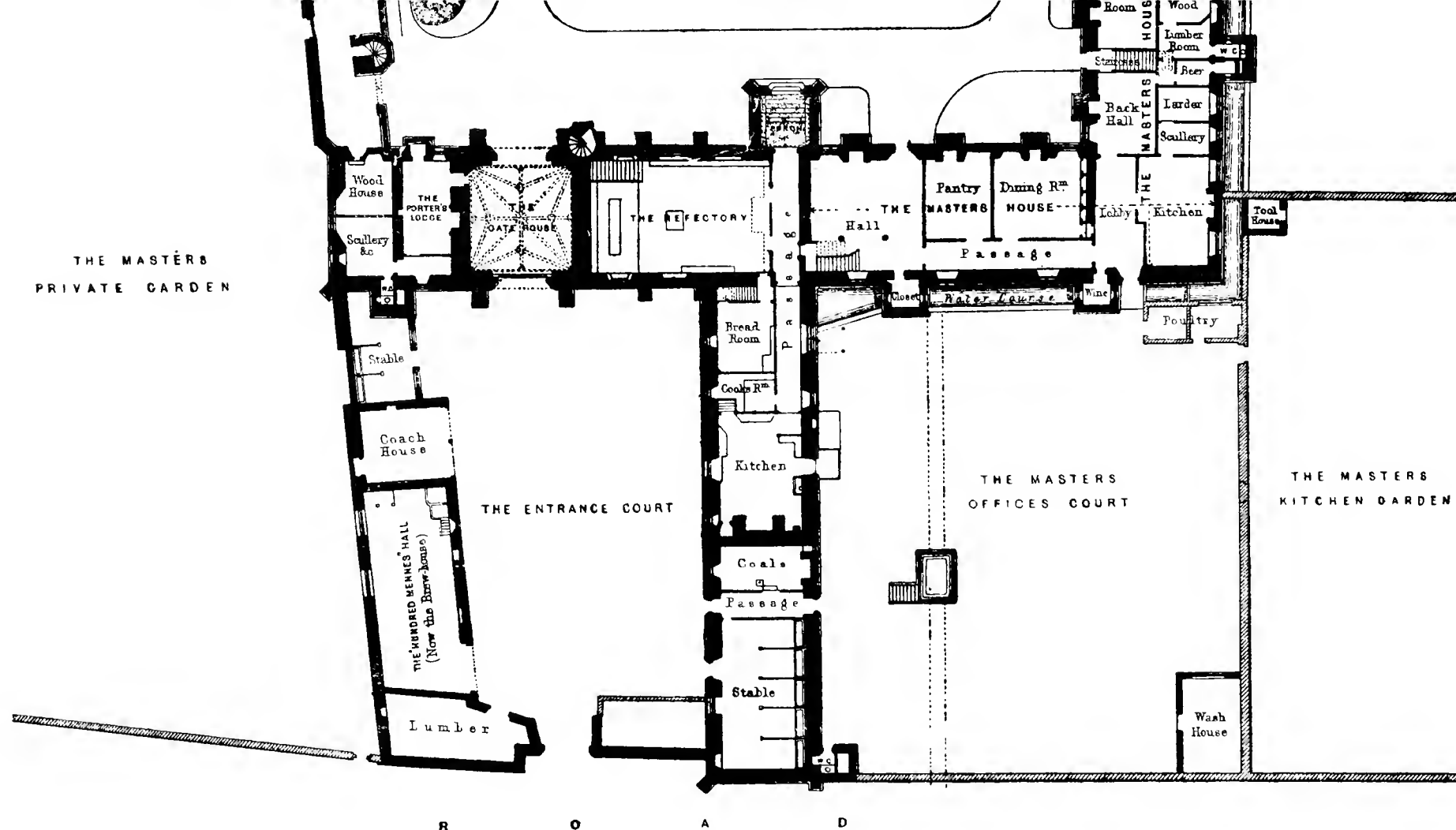
Old English Houses of Alms

gallery, an interesting XVth century staircase, and a raised hearth or open fireplace, in the centre of the floor. This hall originally measured 36 ft. by 24 ft., but a portion was cut off to provide a residence for the master, who is now housed in a modern building erected to the north of the Beaufort Tower, outside the gates.

Interesting as are the secular portions of this foundation, the old Hospital Church, now the parish Church of the Village of St. Cross, a village that owes its origin to the charitable institution set in its midst, is of remarkable value to students of ecclesiastical architecture. Occupying more than a century in building, the exact dates being from 1130 to 1255, it exhibits every style of architecture from Romanesque, through the Transition-Norman and Early English, to the Late Decorated, the Transition-Norman portion being considered the best example of this particular period, in existence. The west front is very beautiful. The south-side is somewhat plainer, owing, no doubt, to the fact that here were placed the early Conventual buildings, since done away with. Between the south transept and the choir aisle is a triple-arched doorway with zig-zag mouldings. The principal objects of interest in the interior are the massive pillars, the triforium with intersecting arches, the altar-slab of Purbeck marble, the stone screens and tabernacle work on either side of the altar, and the roof pendants. In the north choir aisle a tile marks the burial place of King, one of the Brethren, who, although only a working mason, and more than seventy years of age, discovered and opened out the greater part of the mouldings and frescoes on the walls. There is but one monument in the Church, that of Speaker Cornwall, 1789, and a brass in the choir to John de Campeden, 1382, Master. The ancient sacristy adjoining the south transept has a vaulted roof, and three or four recesses or aumbries for keeping the sacred vessels. The exterior walls of this portion indicate that the roof has been twice lowered.

The Hospital and its endowments survived the Reformation. The Vicar-General reported that there was need for "reformation in certain things," and that sturdy beggars were to be repulsed.





R O A D

St. Cross' Hospital.

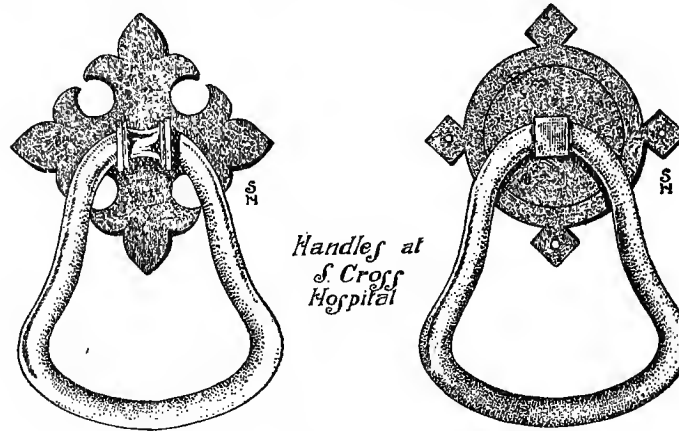
The Ground Plan.
from Dollman's 'Ancient Domestic Architecture'

Note The part of the Hospital from A to B does not exist
 having been taken down in 1789 there is now a
 Dwarf Wall and Iron Railing from C to D

SCALE OF 10 5 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 FEET

Old English Houses of Alms

Mr. A. E. Freeman wrote, "St. Cross has that peculiar attraction which belongs to whatever is first of its own class. No one can pass its threshold without finding himself



landed, as it were, in another age. It seems a place where no worldly thought, no pride or passion, or irreverence could enter ; a spot where, as a modern writer has expressed it, a good man, might he make his choice, would wish to die."

The Bede House, Higham Ferrers, Northants

1425.

This institution was established on the site of an earlier building by Henry Chichele, in 1423, for twelve men and one woman, all to be not less than fifty years of age; the senior bedesman to be termed the prior. The founder, a man of humble birth and a native of Higham Ferrers, became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1414, and his monument may be seen in England's premier cathedral. He also built All Souls' College, Oxford. Miss Clay tells us that there is a tradition that "while keeping the sheep by the river side he was met by William of Wykeham, who recognised his talents and provided for his education. He afterwards desired to found a College in the place where he was baptised, and of this the almshouse formed a part." The Bede House forms a parallelogram, measuring internally 65 ft. 8 in., by 23 ft. 10½ in. The western portion was originally divided into sleeping cabins for the inmates, and thus served for hall and dormitory, the chapel being at the east end. This arrangement is found in many old almshouses, and it appears to owe its origin to the old monastic infirmaries; the idea being to

Old English Houses of Alms

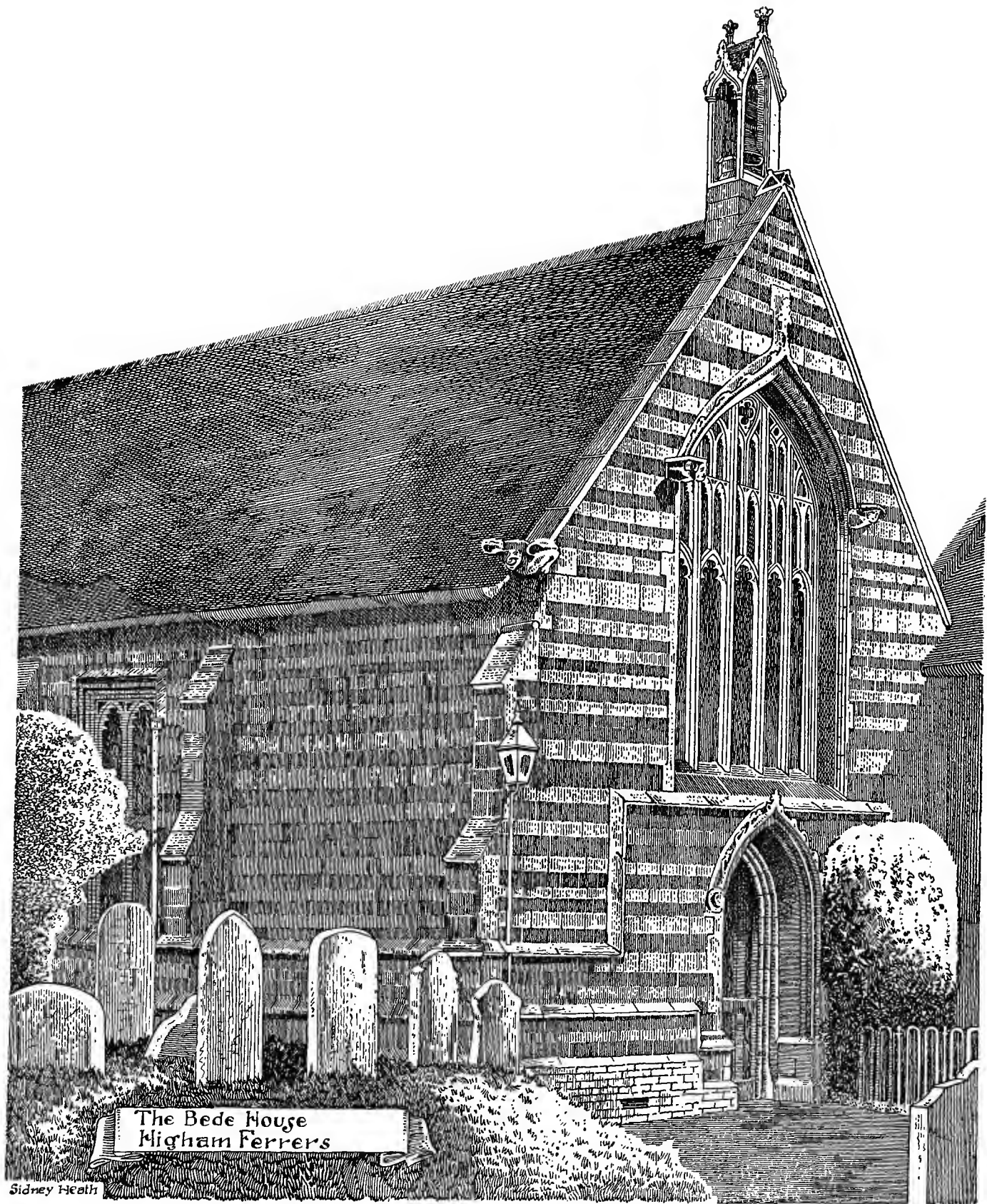
allow the sick and bedridden to join in Divine Service, an open screen only dividing chapel from hall. The alms box for the contributions of charitably minded persons was set up in the middle of the dormitory. An unusual feature was a boarding-school which the Archbishop attached to the Bede House.

Externally, the building has a curious striped appearance, from the alternate courses of red and white stone of which the walls are constructed. The west front consists of a large five-light-window, the arched head being four-centred and slightly ogeed, and the hood-mould crocketed. The moulded details are very good, while the heads forming the hood-mould terminations are similar to those on the windows of the College, another of the Archbishop's gifts to his native place. The doorway beneath the window is also ogee-headed in the hood-mould, which is crocketed. The bell-cot on the apex of the gable is modern. The north and south fronts are divided by buttresses into six bays, in two of which is a two-light square-headed window, with cinquefoil tracery. One bay on each front has a four-centred arched doorway. The chapel has been much restored, and the east window is quite modern.

Internally, the hall has a fine oak roof of six bays, the trusses of which spring from corbels of oak. The arch between hall and chapel is four-centred, with an embattled capital at the springing. The south side of the hall has a large original fireplace. Indications of a building earlier than Chichele's by more than a century, are afforded by the south-west window of this hall, where the trefoiled and soffit-cusped tracery below the transom proclaims it as early Decorated in date. Two entries in the Lincoln registers of presentation to the wardenship of the hospital in 1258 and 1265 respectively, confirm the evidence as to the earlier foundation, which, no doubt, formed the basis for Chichele's fine building.

Among the documents preserved relating to the Bede House, are some fifteenth century statutes and regulations regarding the toilet, eating, bathing, and laundry arrangements of the inmates, which afford very interesting reading.

The hospital and the large estates adjoining are the property of Earl Fitzwilliam.



The Bede House
Higham Ferrers

Almshouses at Ewelme, Oxfordshire

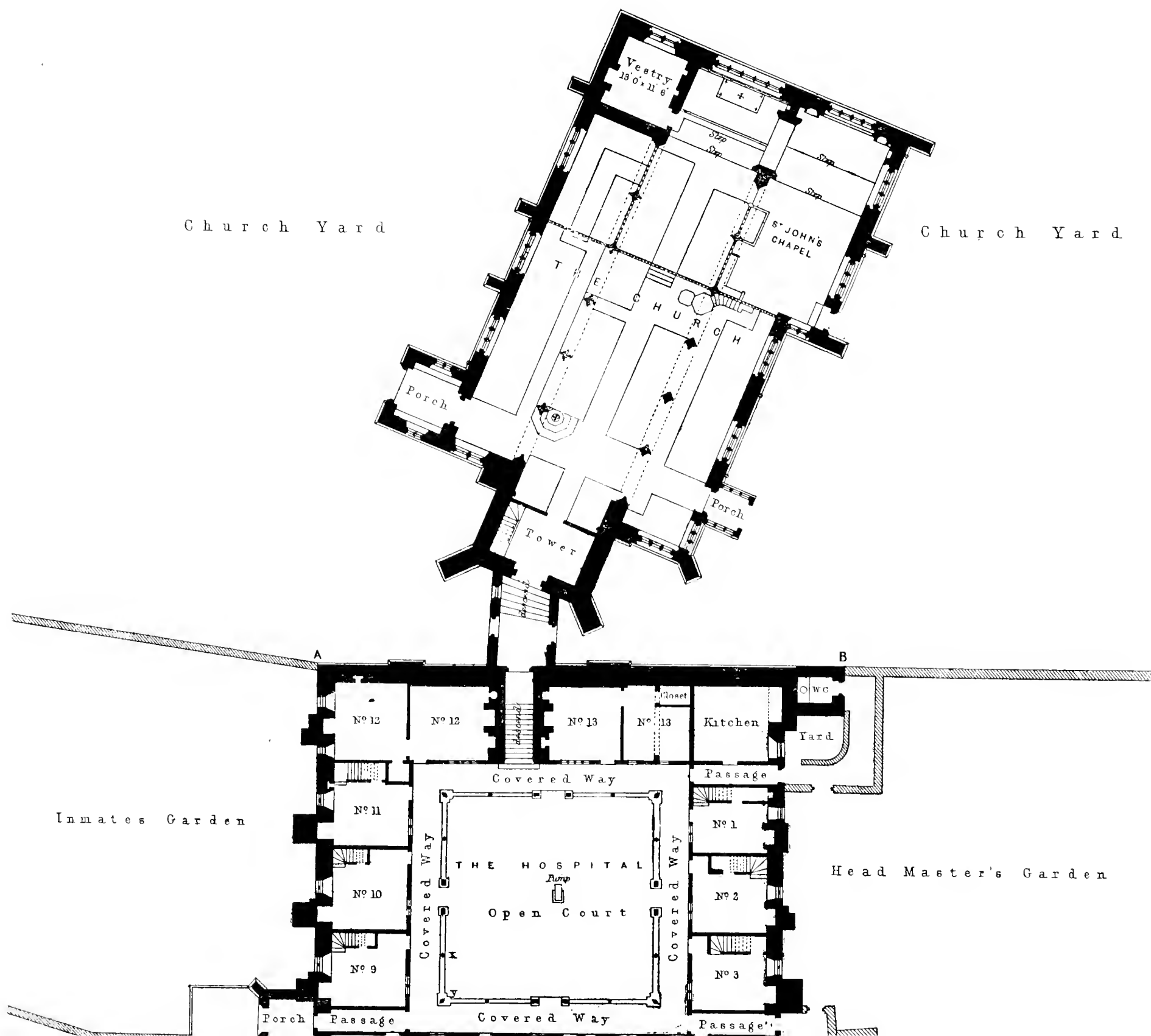
1437.

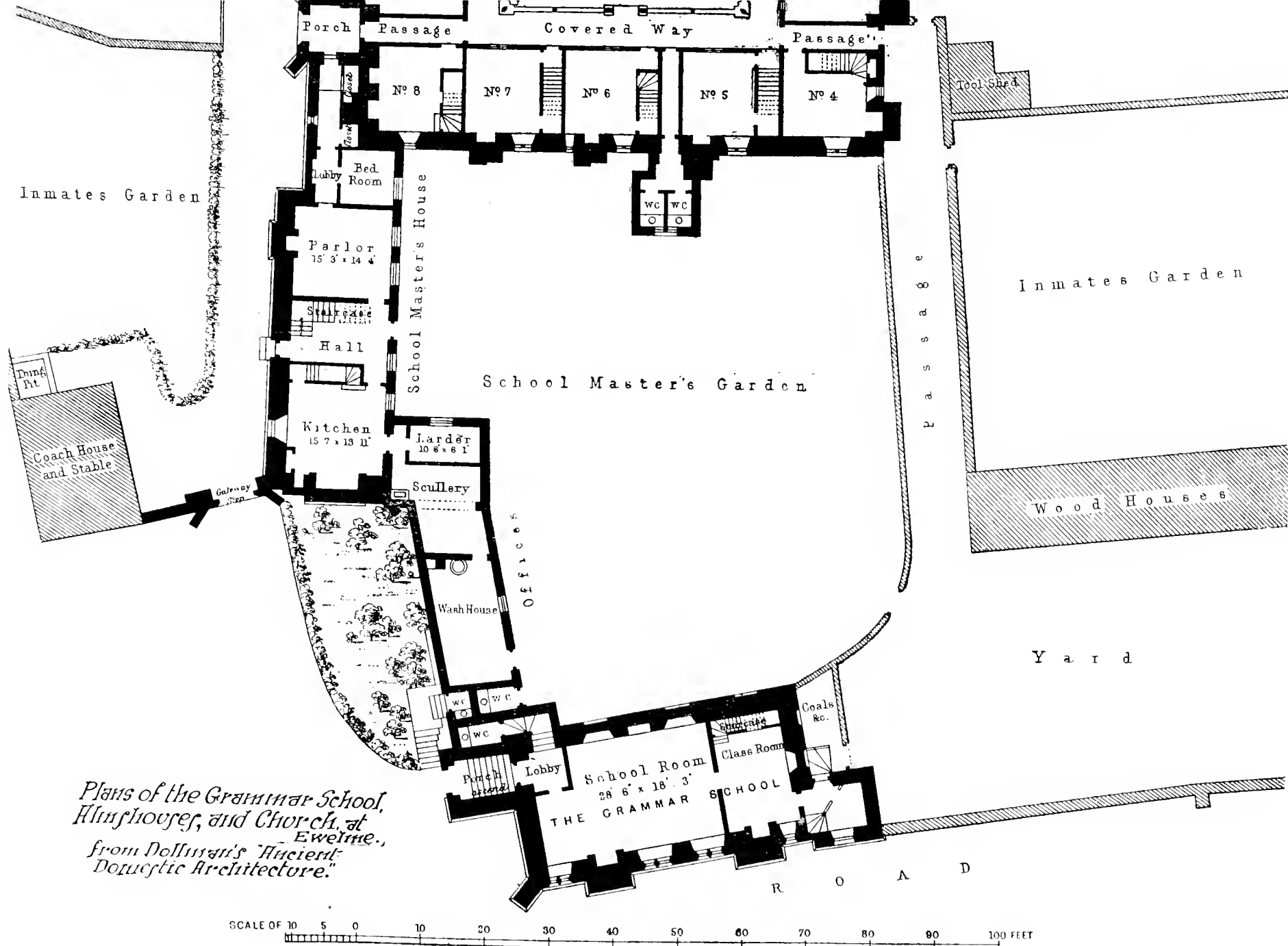
The village of Ewelme, twelve miles S.E. of Oxford, and three miles N.E. of Wallingford, has a very interesting hospital or almshouse. In 1437, Henry VI. granted to William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, and Alice (the granddaughter of Geoffrey Chaucer) his wife, "That they or either the survivor of them, should found an hospital at their Manor of Ewelme, in the county of Oxford, and settle a sufficient endowment not exceeding the yearly value of 200 marks, for the maintenance of two chaplains and thirteen poor men, to be incorporated, and to have a common seal." It was also ordained "that the above number of persons should be ever maintained in it, one of the chaplains or priests to be called master of the almshouse, who shall govern it and shall administer the affairs thereof." The first master was Sir John Seynsberg, and the first incumbent John Bostock. On the completion of the building the house was duly made over to the master and the poor men for ever, and was entitled "God's House," or the house of alms. As a safeguard against the endowments being alienated by any future lords of the manor, the Chancellor of England for the time being was made protector of its revenues. Old documents tell us that those benefited by this institution were to live charitably, meekly, and godly; to be free from drunkenness, and to reveal no secrets of the house. The poor men were further enjoined to keep the cloister and the quadrangle clean. The same founders also endowed the free school adjoining the hospital at its western extremity, now a national school.

The unpopular William de la Pole was beheaded in May, 1449, but previous to this he had provided, by will, for the final endowment of the hospital, as is thus recorded :

"ANNO 1448. HOSPITATE DE EWELME VOCATUM 'GOD'S HOUSE' PER WIL-
LIELMUM DE LA POLE COMITEM SUFFOLCIÆ ET ALICIAM VXOREM, PRO DUOBUS
SACERDOTIBUS, UNO AD PAUPERES INSTRUENDOS, ALIO LUDI MAGISTRO AD
PAUPERES DOCENDOS, UTERQUE X^p, MINISTER XVI^p PER SEPTIMANAM. RELIQUI
DUODECIM XIII^p PER SEPTIMANAM. TRIA MANERIA, RAMRAGE IN HAMPTONIA,
CONOCK IN WILTONIA, MARCHE IN BUCKINGHAMIA";

and by an inquisition taken after his death, it was found that among other possessions in the county which he held jointly with his wife, was the moiety of one hundred acres of wood with appurtenances, in Ewelme, the advowson of the Church of Ewelme, and the advowson of the eleemosynary house or hospital there; all of which continued with a great





*Plans of the Grammar School,
Hinshouses, and Church, at
Ewelme.,
from Dollman's "Ancient
Domestic Architecture."*

Old English Houses of Alms

deal of other property, to be held by his widow in her own right of inheritance. She lived to a great age, and died on the 20th of May, 1475, and was buried in the parish church of Ewelme. On the attainder of the Earl of Lincoln, one of the descendants of William de la Pole during the reign of Henry VIII., the whole of the Suffolk property in Ewelme was forfeited to the Crown, when with Wallingford, already an appendage to the Duchy of Cornwall, it was made a royal manor. As Crown property, James I., in the third year of his reign, annexed the rectory of Ewelme, with a canonry of Christ Church, to the Regius Professorship of Divinity at Oxford, and likewise in 1617 annexed the mastership of the hospital to the Regius Professorship of Physic at Oxford, both of which appointments still remain.

The hospital is contiguous to the west end of the church, with which it is connected by a passage, whence there are doors on the N. and S. sides into the adjoining churchyard. From this passage a short flight of steps leads to the quadrangle, around which are the rooms of the inmates, each of whom has a sitting-room on the ground floor, and a bedroom over. An ambulatory extends all round the quadrangle in front of the dwellings.

The external walls are of stone, the internal walls towards the quadrangle of brick and wood construction. The oak uprights with the herring-bone arrangement of the brickwork gives a very pleasing effect. Of the gables in the centre of each side of the quadrangle only two have retained their original bargeboards, but both of these are very good. The W. side of the quadrangle contains the audit and muniment rooms, and a suite of apartments, once appropriated to the use of the master or schoolmaster. The school adjoining presents many interesting architectural features, but this is somewhat beyond the limits of the present volume.

The church, dedicated in honour of S. Mary the Virgin, is a most interesting piece of building. It consists of a tower at the W. end, nave, and aisles, north and south porches, the latter an open timber one; a chancel with north and south aisles, and a sacristy on the north side of the chancel. The whole of this building was erected by Alice the wife of William de la Pole, after her husband's death, and it exhibits a uniformity of design and of architectural detail that is as unusual as it is valuable. The south aisle of the chancel, called S. John Baptist's Chapel, is its most prominent architectural

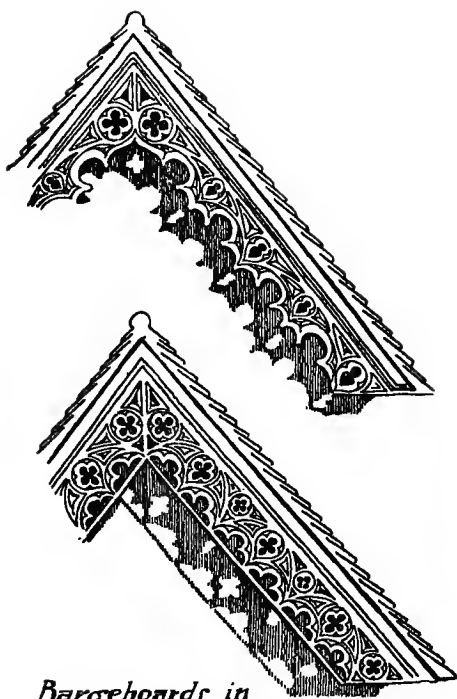
Old English Houses of Alms

feature. The roof is of richly panelled oak, the walls being covered with Scriptural texts and powdered with the sacred monogram, I.H.S. Under one of the arches, between the chancel and this chapel, are the elaborate monumental tombs of the foundress. The effigy is of alabaster, and she is shown habited in a tunic, surcoat, veil, and wimple, with her head (over which is a canopy), reclining on a cushion, supported by winged angels. A coronet adorns her head, and her left arm is encircled with the order of the Garter; the feet rest on a lion. Here also is the tomb of Thomas Chaucer and Maud his wife, on which is a brass showing the husband in full plate armour, and the wife in 15th century costume. The bench ends and encaustic tiles complete the list of good things remaining in this chapel. The church has no constructional chancel arch, and the roofs of nave, aisles, and chancel, together with the rood screen and parcloses, are of good Perpendicular type. The font, placed on the north side of the nave, has a well known elaborate cover, which was restored about 1850. Along the centre of the nave from east to west are the gravestones of the Rectors of Ewelme, and on the floor of the south aisle those of the various masters of the hospital. This aisle has always been set apart for the use of the brethren.

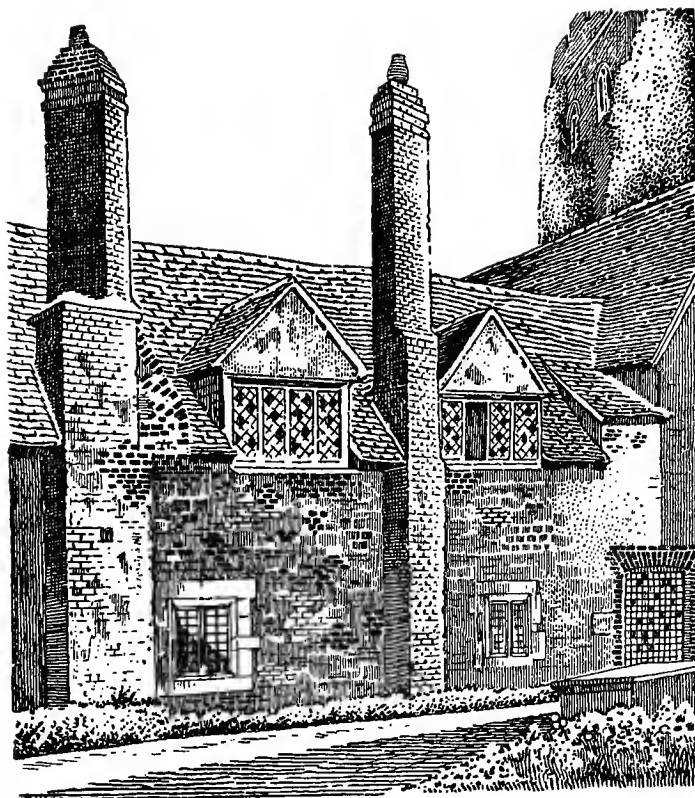
In Leland's time the monument above mentioned of Alice, Countess of Suffolk, had upon it this epitaph, since destroyed:—

ORATE PRO ANIMA SERENISSIMÆ PRINCIPISSÆ ALICIÆ
DUCISSÆ SUFFOLCEÆ, HUIUS ECCLESIAE ET PRIMÆ.
FUNDATRICIS HUIUS ELEMOSINARIÆ; QVÆ OBIIT XX. DIE
MENSIS MAII, AN. MCCCCLXXV, LITERA DOMINICALI A.

This epitaph makes it appear as though the good lady were the sole founder of the Hospital, but such is not the case, for the charter of Henry VI. makes it clear that the license for its foundation was granted to husband and wife jointly, and we have already mentioned the precautions taken by Sir William de la Pole to provide for the endowment, prior to his unfortunate death. The trustees of this interesting foundation are lords of the manor and the principal landowners of Weyhill, Hants.



*Bargeboards in
Quadrangle*



SIDNEY HEATH

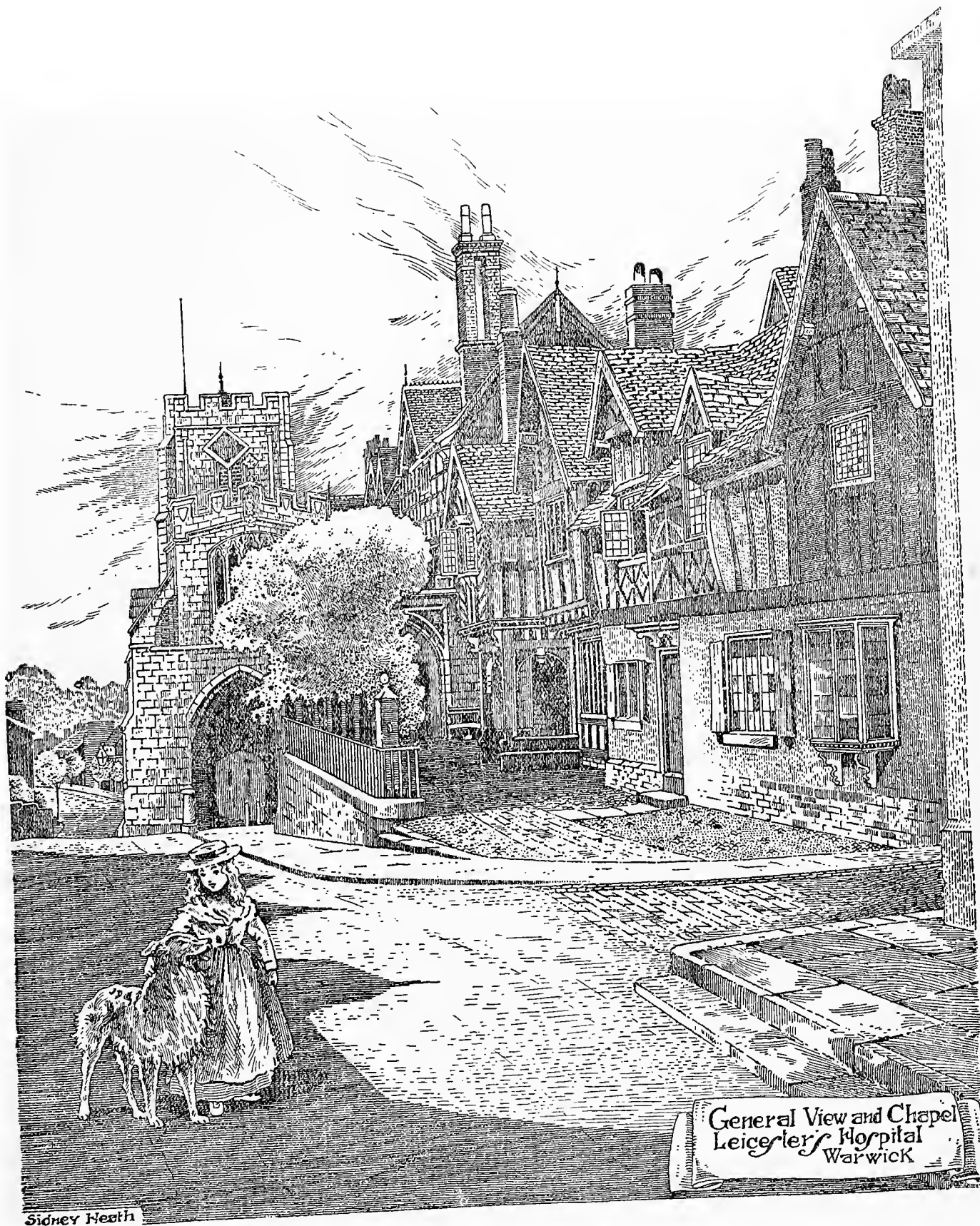
ALMSHOUSES AT EWELME *Oxfordshire*

Leicester's Hospital, Warwick

CIRCA 1450.

The exterior view of Leicester Hospital, with its detached chapel poised high above the arch of the old gateway, is one of the most picturesque to be found in the old town of Warwick. The composition may possess but little real architectural character, but the many gables, steep-tiled roof, clusters of chimney-shafts, projecting windows, and overhanging upper storeys succeed in producing a mass of broken and unexpected lines that captivate the mind by that quality which, for the want of a better word, is called the picturesque.

The small chapel of St. James is built above the old West Gate of the town, and is appropriated to the use of the hospital brethren. The embattled tower dates from the XIVth century, when it was erected by Thomas Beauchamp. The whole edifice was restored in 1863, when the flying buttresses were added to give stability to the south wall. Inside the chapel is divided into two portions by a beautiful Perpendicular oak screen, within which are old oak stalls for the use of the master and brethren. In the space outside the screen a few chairs are provided for any strangers who may care to attend the service held daily at ten o'clock. It is a matter for regret that the large clock has been placed so as to hide the tracery of the tower window on both sides, and the same thing is to be seen at Henley-in-Arden, and in a large number of Midland towns and villages. It is somewhat rare to find an old town gate with a church still standing above it, but here at Warwick we find not only the example above mentioned, but the old East Gate is still standing intact, and this also with a church on the top. This building of church and gate one above another may have arisen in consequence of the limited amount of space available within the restricted boundaries of a mediæval walled town. The custom, however, was not an uncommon one, for at Canterbury the Church of the Holy Cross stood originally above the well-known West Gate of the city until 1380, when it was rebuilt on its present site, just within the walls, by Archbishop Sudbury. St. John's Church, at Bristol, stands above an old city gate, as was also the case at St. Giles' Church, Winchester.



Sidney Heath

General View and Chapel
Leicesters Hospital
Warwick

Old English Houses of Alms

Entering the Courtyard of Leicester's Hospital, we find ourselves in a true mediæval atmosphere. The gateway through which we gain access bears the letters R.L., and the date 1571, which is the date of Robert Dudley's Charity, not of the original buildings, the greater part of which was built by the Guilds of Holy Trinity and St. George in the fifteenth century. Above the main arch of this entrance is the motto, "Droit et Loyal," and the well-known bear and ragged staff of the Leicesters.

When the united Guilds were dissolved, the buildings were acquired by the town, and on New Year's Day, 1571, a deed of gift conveyed the building, and all within it, to the Earl, who thereupon founded the hospital, which bears his name. The foundation provided for a master and twelve men, who were, if possible, to have been soldiers, born in the counties of Warwick or Gloucester, or having resided there for five years. Failing old soldiers, the Charity was to be extended to the poor of Kenilworth, Stratford-on-Avon, Wootton-under-Edge, or Erlingham.

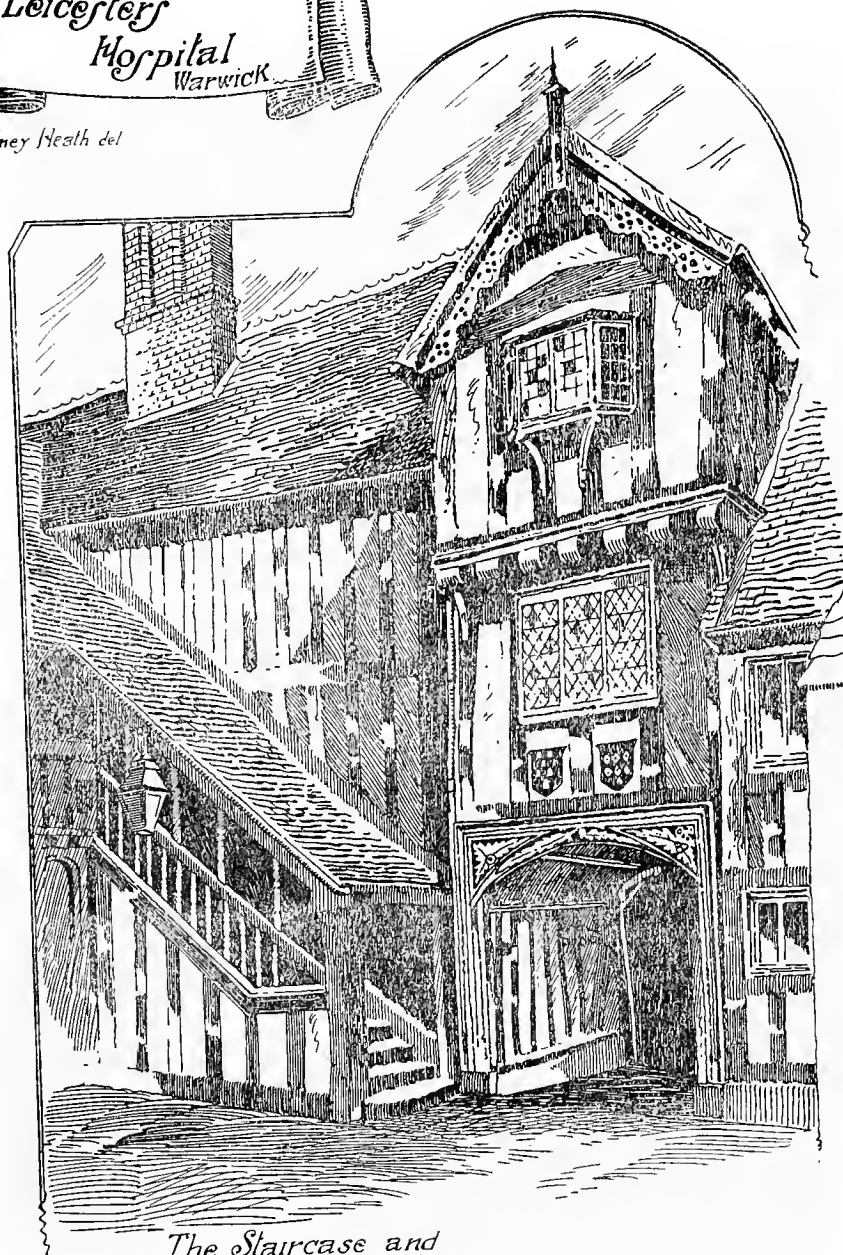
The foundation was richly endowed, and the estates of the hospital now consist of farms and tithes in the counties of Warwick and Gloucester. By an Act of Parliament passed in 1813, the master receives £400 a year, while each brother is allowed £80 a year, in addition to the privileges of the house. Whenever the brethren walk abroad, they wear "gowns of blew cloth," and silver badges, bearing their founder's cognisance. One of the last was stolen some fifty years ago ; the remainder bear the names of their first recipients, and the date 1571.

The building stands on a terrace that rises abruptly from the roadway to the hospital church.

Leicester called the place "Maison Dieu" (the old French mediæval name for a hospital), which may account for the large number of texts which adorn the building.

*Leicester's
Hospital
Warwick*

Sidney Heath del

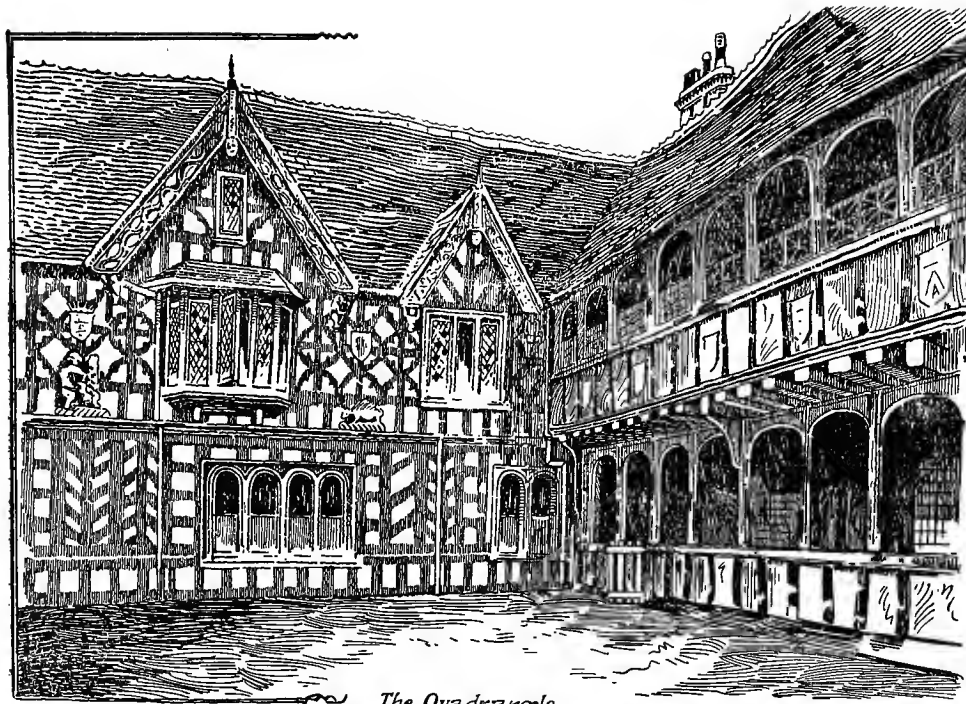


*The Staircase and
Covered Ways*

Old English Houses of Alms

The old parts of the hospital are constructed of timber, lavishly carved with the badges of the Leicester and Warwick families, while at every available point, an emblazoned coat of arms has been set up. The quadrangle contains a cloistered corridor, and a long flight of covered steps. The surrounding buildings comprise the master's lodge, the old guild chamber, and various apartments of the brethren. The banqueting-hall, wherein Sir Fulke Greville entertained King James I., is now partitioned off into various domestic offices. It contains a fine timbered roof of Spanish chestnut, and the apartment is well worth restoring to its original use.

The old kitchen now serves as a common room for the inmates, and contains some of the furniture and relics removed from Kenilworth Castle, in addition to a good collection of ancient arms and armour. The master's lodge contains a suite of beautiful apartments, but these are not generally shown to the public.



The Quadrangle



Entrance to Gateway

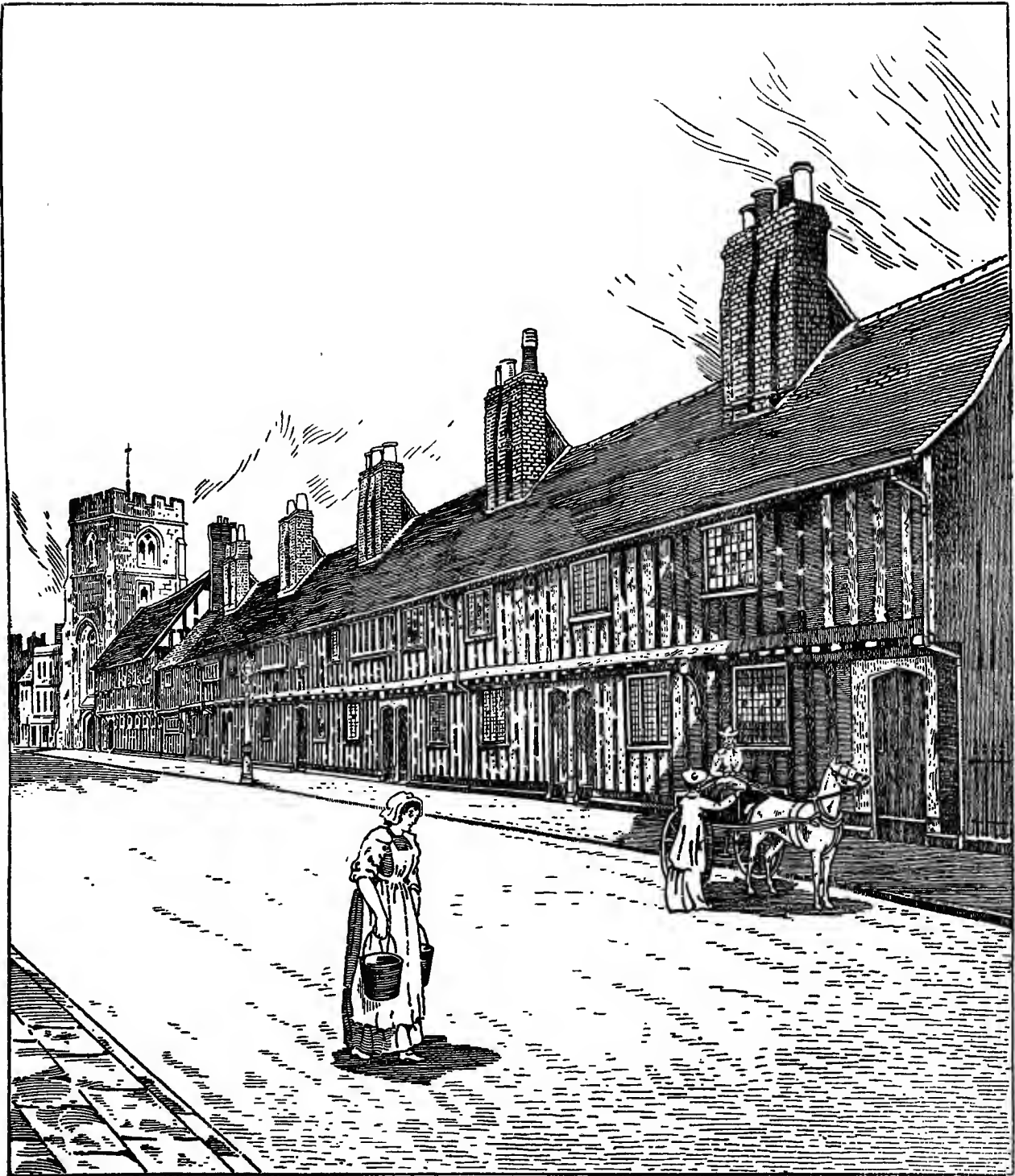
Almshouses at Stratford-on-Avon

1269 (Original Foundation).

The founder of this Charity is unknown, but in early times, about 1269, it appears to have become associated with the Guild of the Holy Cross, the chapel of which still remains in close proximity to the almshouses. Stratford, at one time, had several guilds, which, eventually, all became merged in the Guild of the Holy Cross. The guild almshouses, with the exception of those at Abingdon, do not appear to have survived the dissolution of these fraternities.

The present buildings have retained many characteristics of their 16th century origin, notwithstanding many restorations, both within and without. Until a few years ago, the whole of the massive oak uprights of the street frontage were covered with rough cast or "stucco," a custom that appears to have been very prevalent in the Midlands. This has now been removed with the happiest result. The clustered and solidly-buttressed chimney stacks are massive erections of brick.

In 1901, a curious custom, relating to the foundation, was revived, on the discovery of an old document known as "Sir Hugh Clopton's Settlement in his Name and Family," which had been deposited in the museum attached to Shakespeare's Birthplace. Sir Arthur Hodgson, the then owner of the Clopton Estates, on learning the nature of the deed, resolved that the terms of the bequest should be carried out, thus reviving a quaint ceremony of old Stratford that had fallen into desuetude for more than a century. The bequest bears the date December 12th, 1732, and stipulates for the preaching of a sermon in the ancient chapel of the Guild of the Holy Cross on May 29 in each year, "annually commemorating the happiness of the glorious restoration of our Constitution in Church and State," for which the sum of one guinea was to be paid to the vicar of the parish, five shillings to the clerk, and one shilling each given to the twenty-four almsfolk. The bequest further provides for the purchase of blue coats for the men, and blue gowns for the women every second year, "to be accounted from the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which shall happen next after the decease of the said Hugh Clopton," and upon the coats of the men and the gowns of the women, the cross, the well known heraldic cognisance of the Clopton family, was to be affixed. Any residue was to be spent in the purchase of straw hats and aprons for the women, or in such other manner, "as the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses shall think fit."



Sidney Hezih

Almshouses at Stratford-on-Avon

Jesus Hospital, Lyddington

1480.

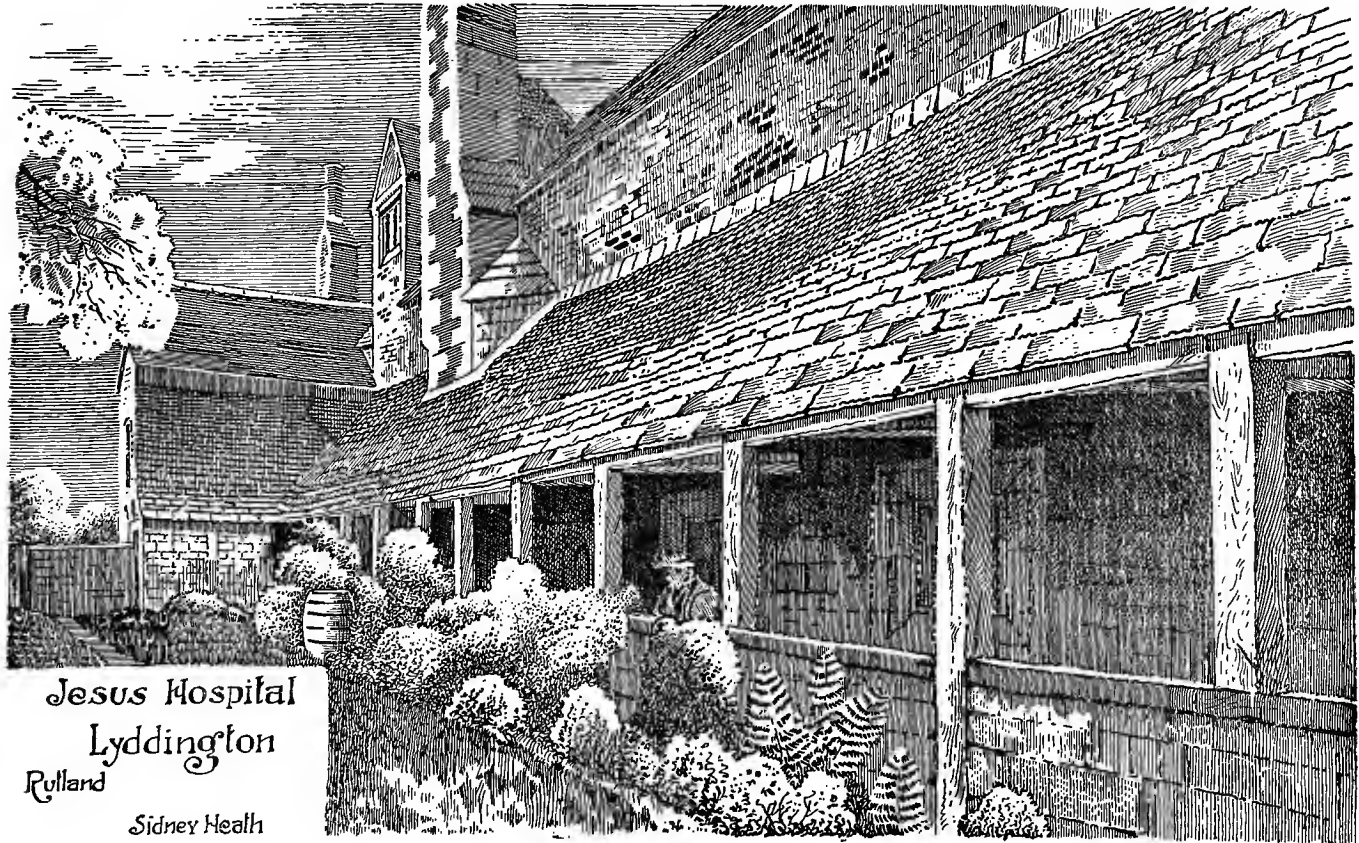
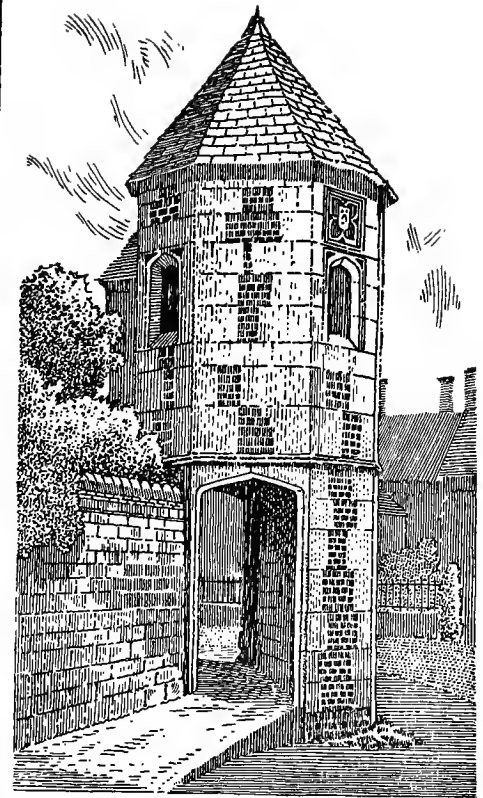
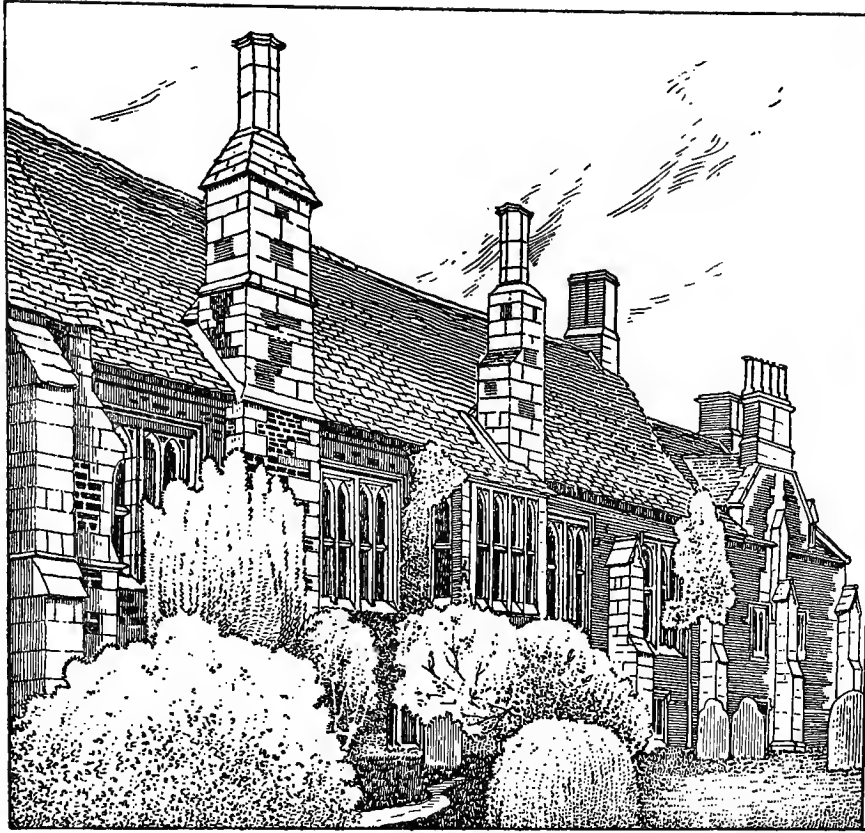
Lyddington, near Uppingham, in Rutland, possesses in its Bede House, one of the most interesting buildings in the country, and one, moreover, that has not yet received the attention it deserves at the hands of both architect and antiquary. Its not least pleasing feature is the fact that it shows no signs whatever of extensive restoration, but has merely been kept in repair, and to this is due its extraordinary value as a piece of mediæval architecture, probably the best example of its period in the whole country.

Originally built as a palace or country residence for the Bishops of Lincoln, it was embattled and fortified by Bishop Henry de Burghersh in 1320-42. To the architectural student of almshouses proper, this building has little value, as it was not until 1602 that it was converted by Thomas, Second Baron Burghley, into a hospital for the reception of a warden, twelve poor men, and two poor women, the buildings then existing having been erected by Bishop John Russell in 1480-96. The foundation was endowed with land at Kingscliffe in Northamptonshire, which now produces an annual income of about £116.

The original great hall of the palace is intact. Here there is a very good flat oak-panelled ceiling, a fine oriel, and a large open fireplace, above which appear the arms of Bishop Russell. The ceiling has a deep cornice with richly moulded tracery in oak, while portions of old glass in the windows display various episcopal arms, crests, and badges; relics, as are the large heraldic hatchments on the walls, of the building's former episcopal greatness. Below the hall are the remains of the old kitchen buttery and other domestic offices. On the north side is a delightful old cloistered walk, the lean-to roof of which is supported on massive oak uprights, while the mouldings of windows and doorways are remarkably well preserved.

The curious octagonal tower, bearing the arms of Bishop Russell, is approached by steps from the old palace garden. There is a tradition to the effect that a similar tower was originally placed at each angle of the garden, but if such were the case, no trace of any other remains. It is probable that in Bishop Russell's time the tower was capped with battlements, which have since been replaced with a stone tile roofing. The little building is octagonal, of which five sides project into the roadway. The lower storey is pierced by two archways, through which passes the public path, while the upper storey is entered from the raised path of the garden by a slightly projecting doorway. There is little reason to doubt that it was originally a kind of gateway and watch-tower, from whence the approaches to the palace could be seen.

A full description of this Bede House, and a number of illustrations, appeared in "Country Life" of July 24th, 1909.



Jesus Hospital
Lyddington
Rulland
Sidney Heath

Browne's Hospital, Stamford

1493.

The old town of Stamford, Lincolnshire, has a number of almshouses, of which perhaps the most interesting is that founded in the reign of Edward IV., by William Browne, a native of the town. The founder "was a Marchant of a very wonderful Richeness" we are told by Leland, who gives the dedication of the Bede House as All Saints.

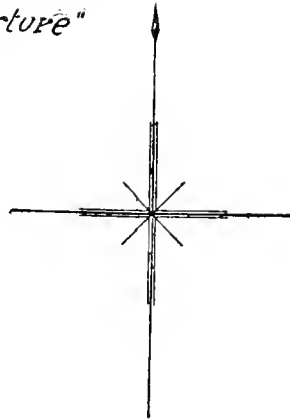
Miss Clay writes: "The founder had willed that there be for ever a certain almshouse, commonly called William Browne's Almshouse, for the invocation of the most glorious Virgin Mary, and All Saints, to the praise and honour of the Name Crucified."

Browne died before the completion of the building, and in 1493 his wife's brother, Thomas Stoke, or Stock, Canon of York and Chaplain to the Lord Chancellor, obtained fresh letters patent for the better administration of the foundation. He also gave to the hospital the manors of Swafeld and North Witham, several tenements, and a silver seal. The seal, which is still in existence, shows the Father supporting the Saviour upon the Cross between His knees, while the Spirit is represented as a Dove.

In 1610 the Charity was again re-founded by letters patent, when it was directed that the inmates should consist of a warden, confrater, ten poor men, and two poor women advanced in age. Stock finished building the foundation, the chapel of which was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin on December 25th, 1495. The south front, comprising the entrance porch, audit-room, and dormitories, is very characteristic of the late 15th Century style of Architecture. The tower surmounting the roof is modern; it replaced a small bell-cot, which, in its turn, formed no part of the original structure. Inside, the main building contains some fine suites of apartments, the windows having retained a good deal of old glass. A writer in 1858 says: "The original stone altar has been preserved, and forms part of the pavement at the entrance to the chapel. It is remarkable for its unusually large dimensions, and the five crosses are still very perfect."

The miserere stalls and sedilia are also still in existence.

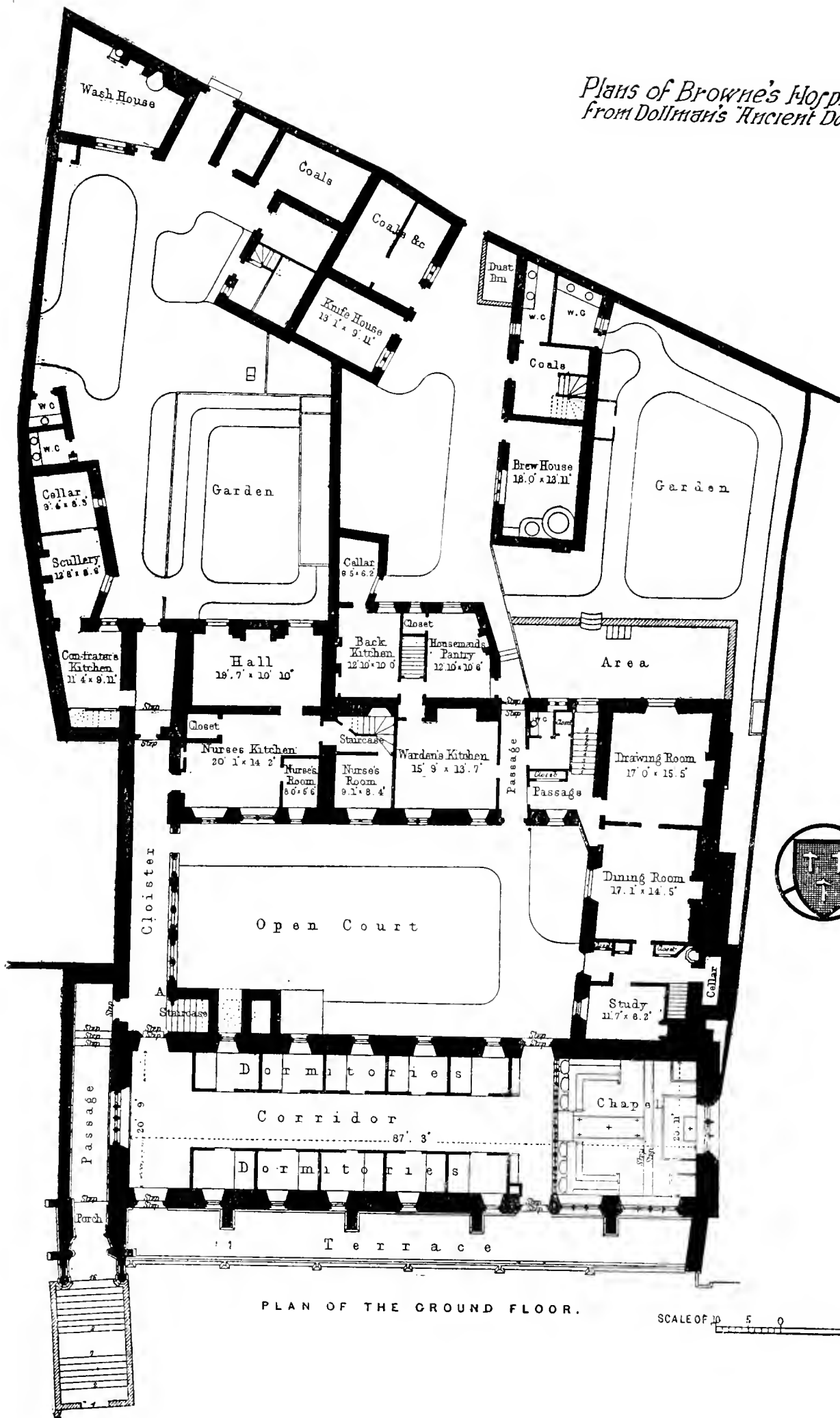
*Plans of Browne's Hospital, Stamford.
from Dollman's "Ancient Domestic Architecture"*



*The 3 Shields and Crest below exist in the W. End of the West End of Corridor on the Ground Floor.
The Brass Plate containing the inscription is on the Wall of the Cloister at A. on Ground Floor.*



her nona structura retinens habitacula
Sit pmanens p tempora longa futura
Debilibus sit et lenibus fuit edificata
Pampibus non diuitibus dom' ista beat
hanc qui fundavit dotavit ppetuavit
Erimina cu davit sua credimus oia le
Constructor cui' patrie decus urbis
Will's dictus tuc Browne heu jam n
Sit dom' ista precu ait h mea no
Sit baptizetur sit dom' ista prec

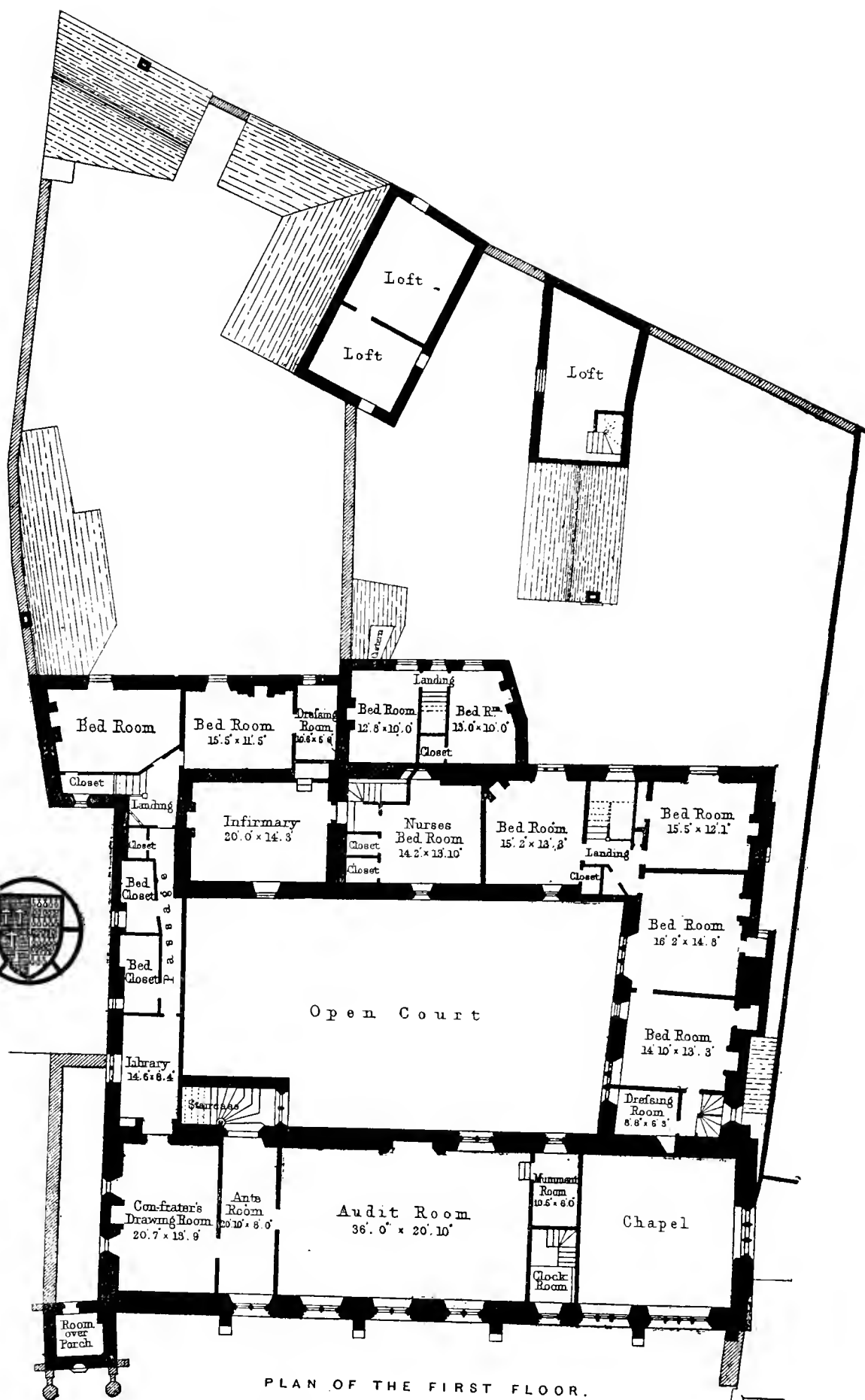
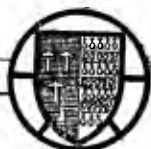


PLAN OF THE GROUND FLOOR.

SCALE OF 10 5 0 10 20 30 40 50 60

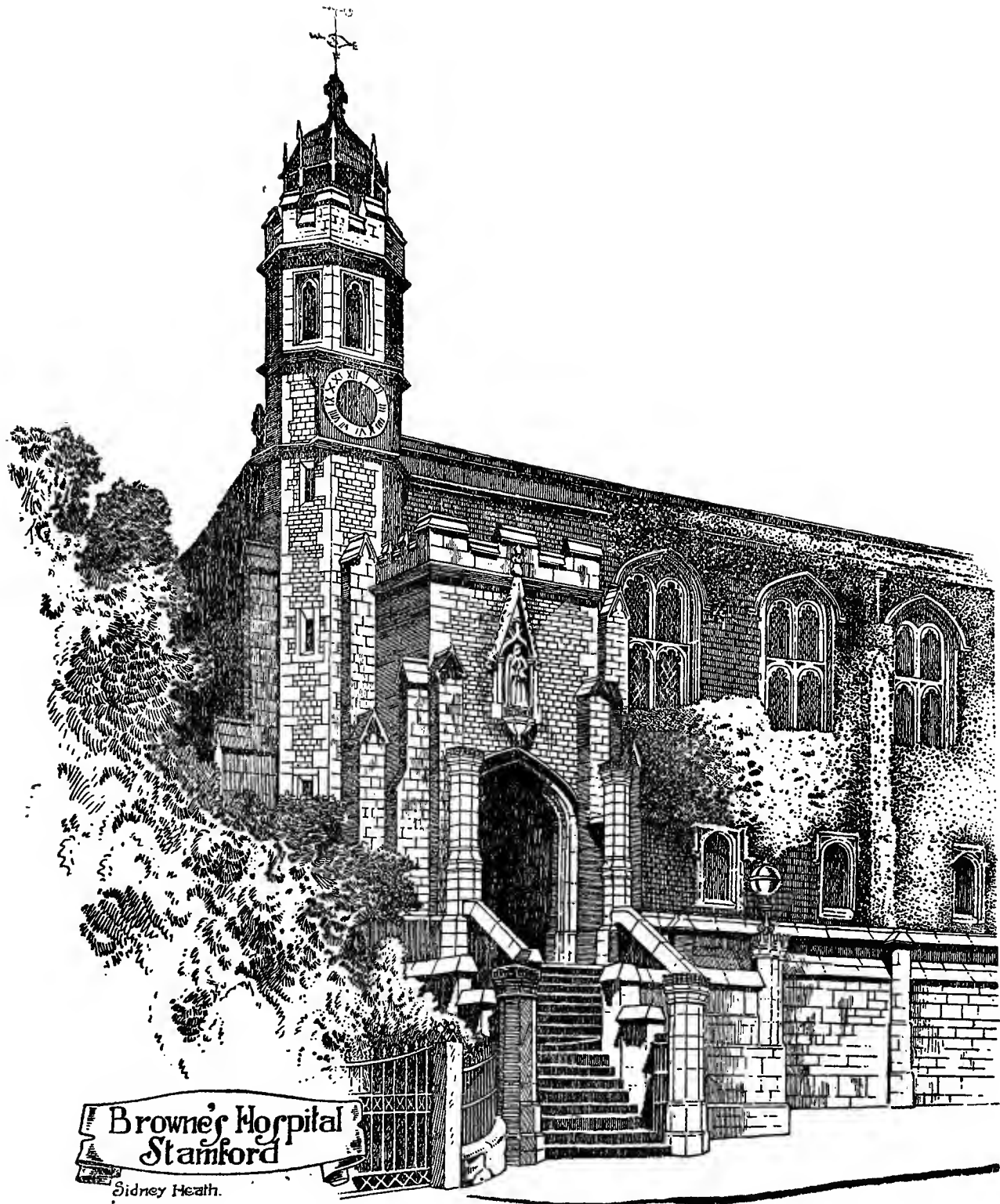
in the Window at
round Floor.
cription is affixed to
und, Floor Plan.

abitacula plura
a futura
dificata
ista beata
tuavit
as oia lavit
urbis et huius
nu jam neredictus
nea no reputet
ta precu



PLAN OF THE FIRST FLOOR.

60 70 80 90 100 FEET



Bablake Hospital, Coventry

1509.

Bablake, or more commonly, Bond's Hospital, at Coventry, although not of such architectural importance as the magnificent range of buildings in the same town known as Ford's Hospital, has many points of interest. It is twenty years earlier than the Charity founded by William Ford, and, like that example, is composed largely of strong timber work filled in with lath and plaster. The gables are richly carved and perforated, the finials having deep mouldings. The windows are mullioned and diamond paned, while many of them have headings of tracery, and project oriel fashion.

This institution was founded by Thomas Bond, in 1509, for the support and residence of old men of the Trinity and Corpus Christi Guilds, and it is connected through a later benefaction with the Bablake School for Boys, founded in the reign of Elizabeth. Fifty years after its first establishment the hospital had another benefactor in Thomas Wheatley, a wealthy ironmonger of Coventry, about whose acquisition of wealth a curious legend has been preserved, to the effect that, in the course of trade, he sent a representative to Spain to purchase some steel gads, which he did at open auction, and despatched them to his employer at Coventry. When the cases were opened, they were found to contain, instead of the articles ordered, a large quantity of cochineal and ingots of silver. The agent not knowing from whom he had made the purchase, they were kept by Wheatley for a considerable time, in the hope that a claimant would appear; but this not happening, he sold them, the proceeds going to swell his already large donations to charitable institutions. The hospital seems to have enjoyed an uneventful existence, down to the year 1619, when one of the pensioners, John Johnson, poisoned no less than eight of his co-brothers with rats-bane, in the hope of becoming senior brother of the house, to which position additional privileges were attached. On the death of his eighth victim he was suspected and questioned, whereupon he promptly poisoned himself. He was buried in the church, but his guilt being clearly proved, the body was dug up and buried at the cross roads in Leicester highway, "with a stake through it, according to law," as we are told by Dugdale, the Warwickshire historian. The foundation was dedicated, like the Guild that supported it, to the Holy Trinity, the symbol of which was borne on their gowns by the almsmen.



BablaKe Hospital, Coventry.
Sidney Meath.

Abbot Beere's Almshouse, Glastonbury

1512.

Situated in a yard at the back of the old Red Lion Inn at Glastonbury, is a small almshouse for women, with a chapel attached, founded in 1512 by Richard Beere, last Abbot but one of Glastonbury. The gateway is a massive piece of building, exhibiting above the arch a deeply carved panel displaying a Tudor rose and a cap encircled by a crown. The heraldic animals supporting the charge have become much defaced. At the west end of the chapel, a portion of which is shown through the open door of the gateway, are the arms of the old abbey—a cross fleury between two roses—and jugs of beer, the punning heraldic device of the abbot, who was to Glastonbury what Wykeham was to Winchester. Had the vicissitudes of time dealt more kindly with his work, the buildings he erected would have brought the forgotten abbot as large a measure of praise as is given to the prelate of Winchester. Both men combined with austere devotion a genius for building; but whereas Wykeham's work has mostly survived, that of his fellow cleric nearly all vanished with the downfall of the great abbey of which he was once the head. The dedication of the adjoining chapel is unknown. At the side of the altar is a recess, which, on the supposition that this is the original altar, may have been used for storing plate and vestments. One of the main entrances to the abbey was through the almshouse gardens, and the stones of the gateway leading thither could be seen until a short time ago in many parts of the Red Lion Inn. Since the sale of its abbey to the Church of England in 1907, Glastonbury has suffered from extensive restoration. The hostelry has been stripped of its old monastic stones, which have been used as the basis for the new gateway, built as closely as possible to the plan and style of the old one. In addition to much work at the abbey, Beere built the church of St. Benignus, on which his initials and rebus appear, and the little building in High Street called the Tribunal, which some consider to have been the abbey court-house. It was Abbot Beere who rebuilt, in 1510, the leper hospital at Taunton, the beautiful sculptured panel of which, showing the initials R.B. and a heavily-jewelled mitre (Glastonbury was a mitred abbey), is given as a frontispiece to this volume. Glastonbury also has the remains of the Hospital of St. Mary Magdalene, mainly Early English with debased Perpendicular additions, and a good bell-gable figured in Parker's "Glossary," Vol. II., Plate 17.



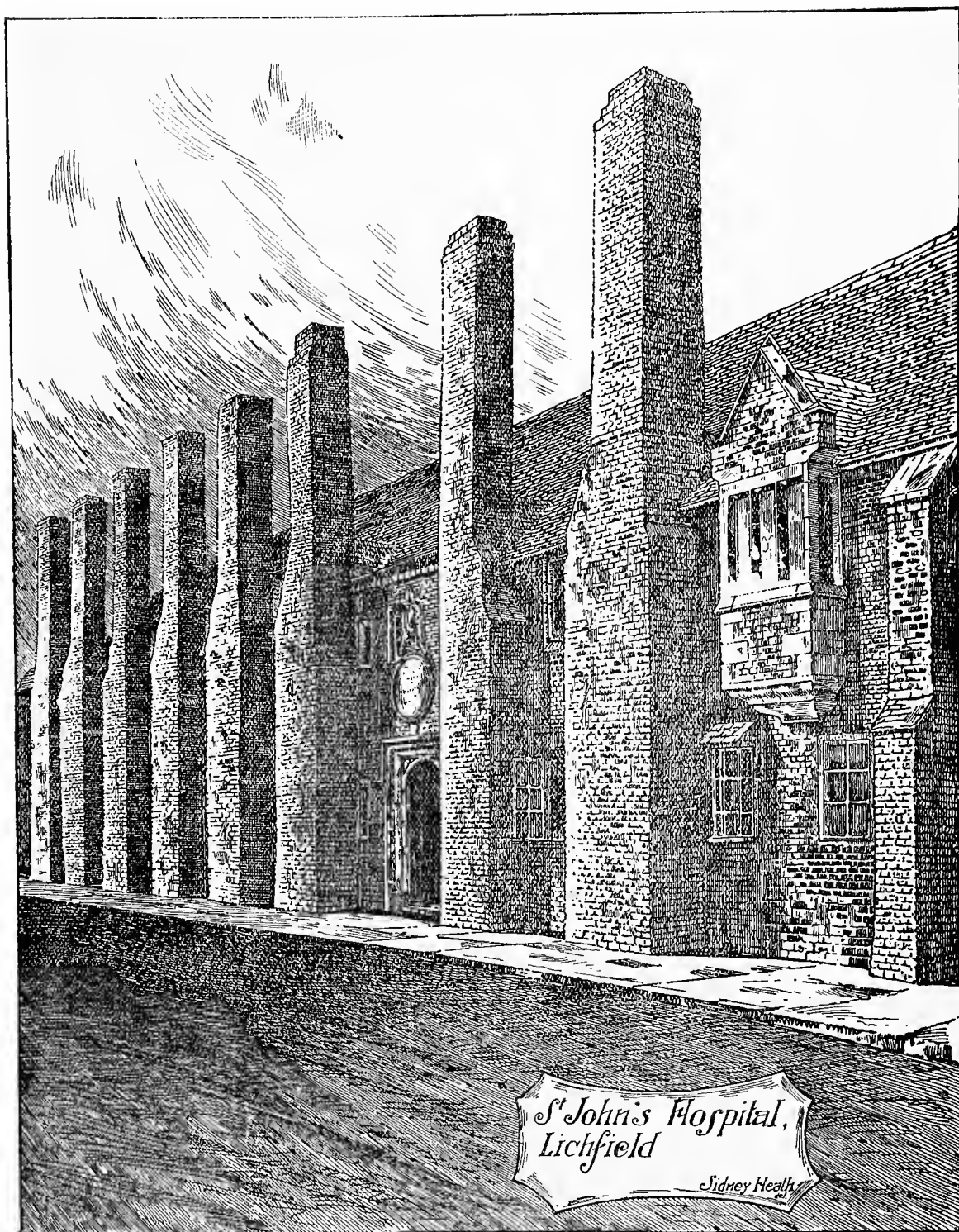
Abbot Beere's Almshouse, Glastonbury.

Sidney Heath

St. John's Hospital, Lichfield

CIRCA 1500.

The date of this foundation is unknown, the founder being one of the three Bishops Roger who ruled over the See of Lichfield. Little is known about it until it was re-endowed and practically rebuilt by Bishop William Smyth, who was consecrated to the See of Coventry and Lichfield in 1493. As Smyth was shortly afterwards translated to the See of Lincoln, and died in 1514, the re-building of this old charity was probably completed about the end of the 15th century. Its most distinctive architectural feature is the extraordinary row of massive chimney shafts projecting some distance from the face of the wall. The attached chapel unfortunately underwent a drastic "restoration" by Chancellor Law in 1840, when the whole of its ancient features, fittings, and furniture were ruthlessly swept away. Over the entrance doorway is a large tablet surmounted by armorial bearings, and a bishop's mitre, together with an inscription recording the munificence of the bishop, who is remembered as the founder of Brasenose College, Oxford, and a great benefactor to St. John's Hospital, Banbury. Thomas Fuller, the rare old divine, says of him that "this man wheresoever he went may be followed by the perfume of charity he left behind him."



*St John's Hospital,
Lichfield*

Sidney Heath

Greenway Almshouses, Tiverton

CIRCA 1517.

Until the year 1830 no town in the west of England had retained its old-world buildings in a more perfect state than Tiverton. At the above named date, however, the place underwent so prolonged a "restoration" that the work was not completed until 1854. During this period the beautiful screen in S. Peter's Church, commemorating the munificence of John and Joan Greenway, was pulled down, with the exception of a few fragments now at Powderham; while the rood-screen, which suffered the same fate, has been re-erected at Holcombe. Possibly because they were mere charities possessed of no great wealth, the Greenway, Waldron, and Slee Almshouses, the two former dating from the first quarter of the XVI. century, were spared. The first named was erected, *circa* 1517, by John Greenway, a wealthy wool merchant, and Joan his wife, whose memory is preserved in the following rhyme carved in bold letters under the main cornice of the building:—

"HAVE GRACE YE MEN AND PRAY

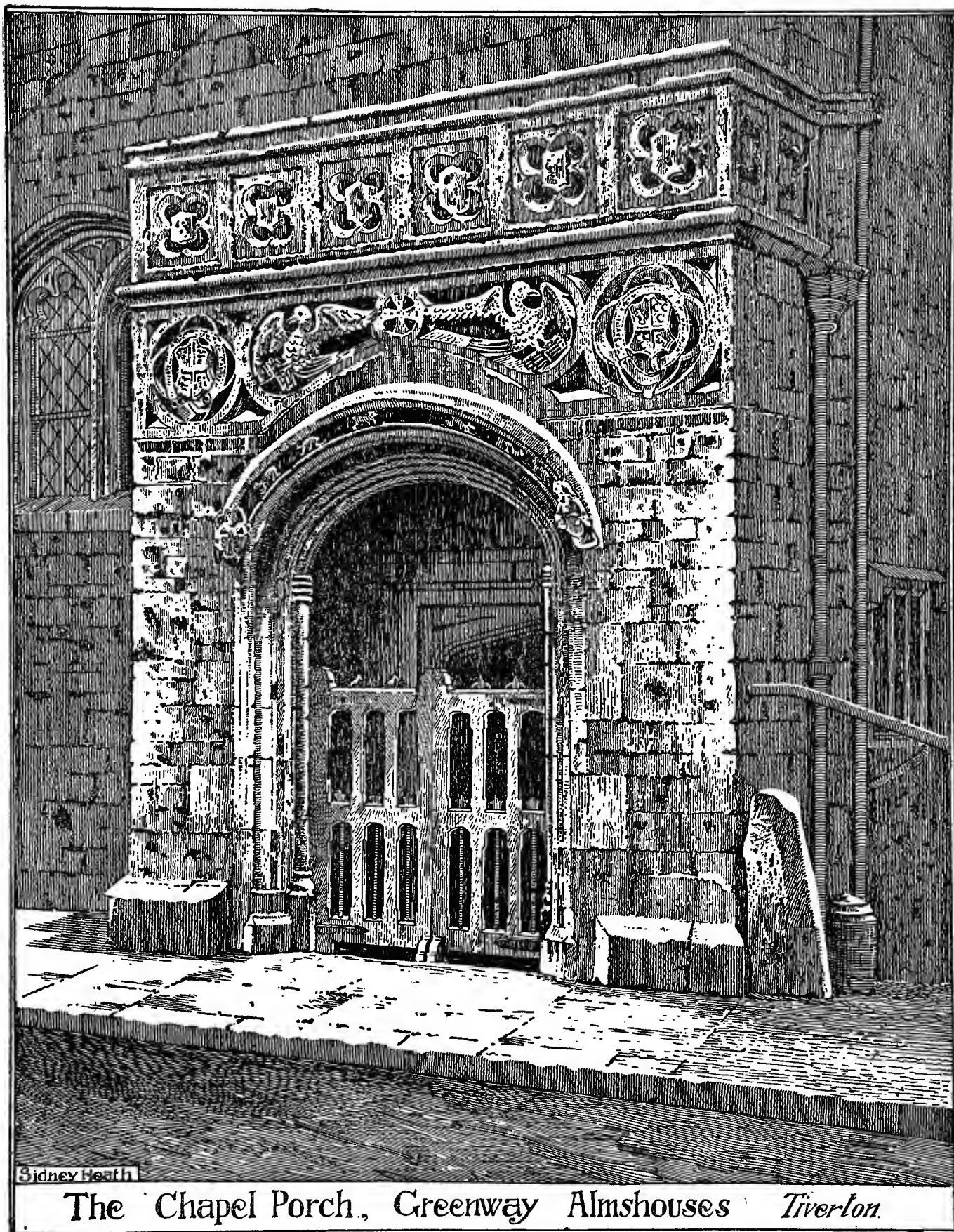
FOR THE SOWL OF JOHN AND JONE GRENWAY."

Its most distinctive architectural feature is the projecting porch of the chapel with its wealth of sculpture. On either side of the Greek cross above the apex of the arched doorway is an eagle carrying a bundle of sticks, and on either side of these again a shield, that on the dexter charged with the arms of England and France, quarterly, encircled by the Order of the Garter, that on the sinister bearing the arms of Courtenay and De Redvers, also within the Garter. Above this interesting piece of stone carving are a series of recessed panels, within which are quatre-foils supporting shields bearing various monograms or arms, but all somewhat worn.

The device of the eagle and sticks has long been a puzzle to antiquaries, and one that has been found on four buildings only, viz., Greenway Almshouses, Tiverton Church, Ford Abbey, and Colcombe Castle. As it does not appear until the first quarter of the XVIth century, and then only on buildings of which the Courtenays were owners or patrons, it may possibly bear some allusion to that great Devonshire house.

The brass effigies of John and Joan Greenway, *circa* 1529, lie on the pavement of the beautiful Greenway Chapel in Tiverton Church, but only one shield remains, charged with the arms of the merchant adventurers, and this inscription:—

"PRAY FOR JOHN GREENWAY."



Sidney Heath

The Chapel Porch, Greenway Almshouses Tiverton.

Ford's Hospital, Coventry

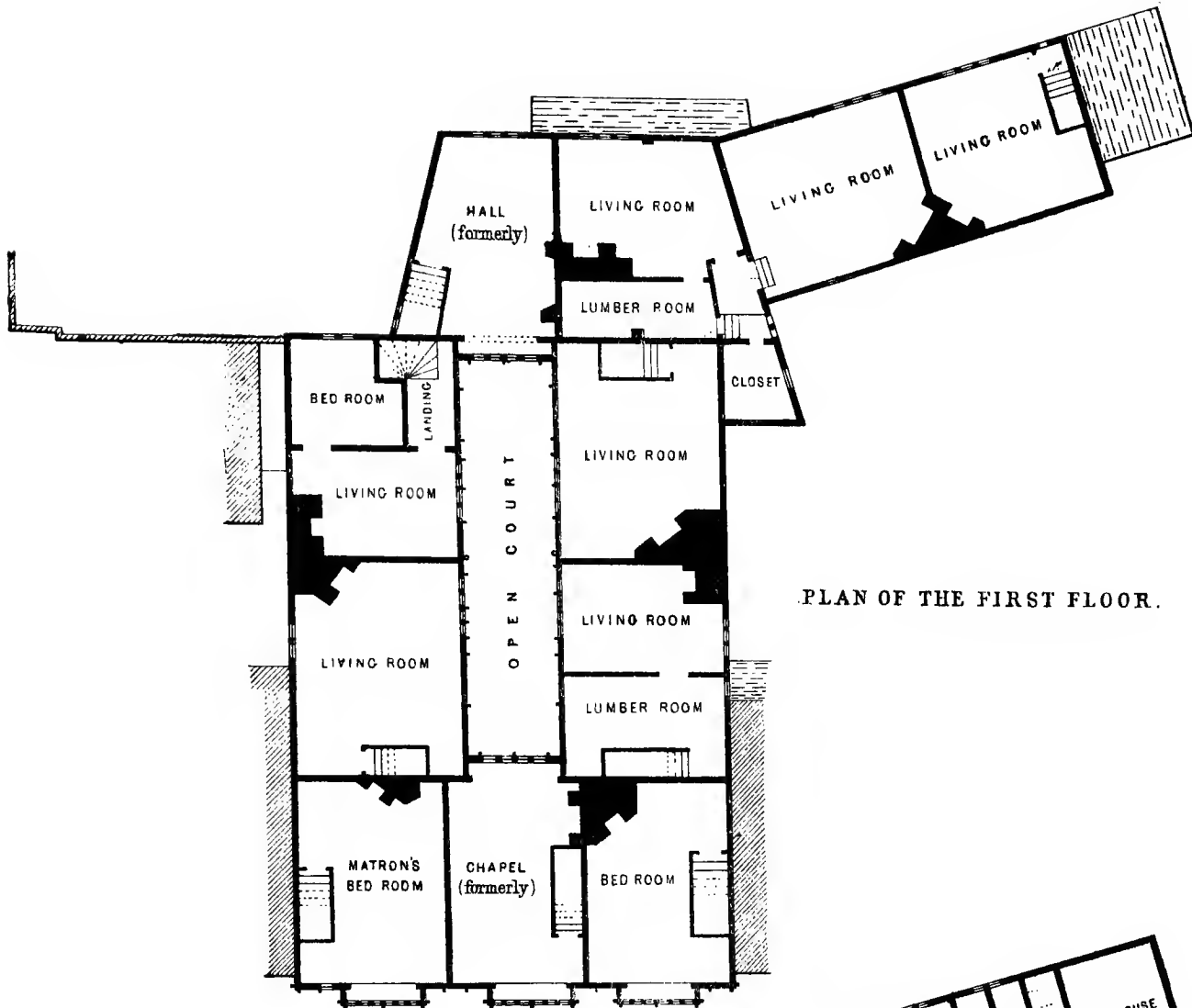
1592.

Coventry, the town of the Three Spires, possessed until comparatively recent years, more remains of XVth and XVIth century timbered houses than any other English town, with the exception perhaps of Chester. The alternating periods of depression followed by the great trade revivals that have periodically swept over the town, have had a baneful effect on the old buildings. With the decline of the silk trade the place became deserted and the houses neglected until watchmaking once more filled the town with residents. When this in its turn declined, Coventry lay almost desolate, until the cycle industry filled it with such an overflow of population that enormous areas of the old town were pulled down to afford the necessary accommodation for the artificers. Thus it is that modern methods of production have their destructive as well as their productive force ; for, in this money loving age, no memorials are allowed to stand in the way of what are called modern "improvements," as witness the deplorable fate of Crosby Hall and the narrow escape of the Whitgift Hospital at Croydon. Fortunately, Coventry has not swept its old-world buildings entirely away, for the place will always be worth visiting so long as it retains such architectural gems as S. Mary's Hall, and the two old almshouses erected by their pious founders.

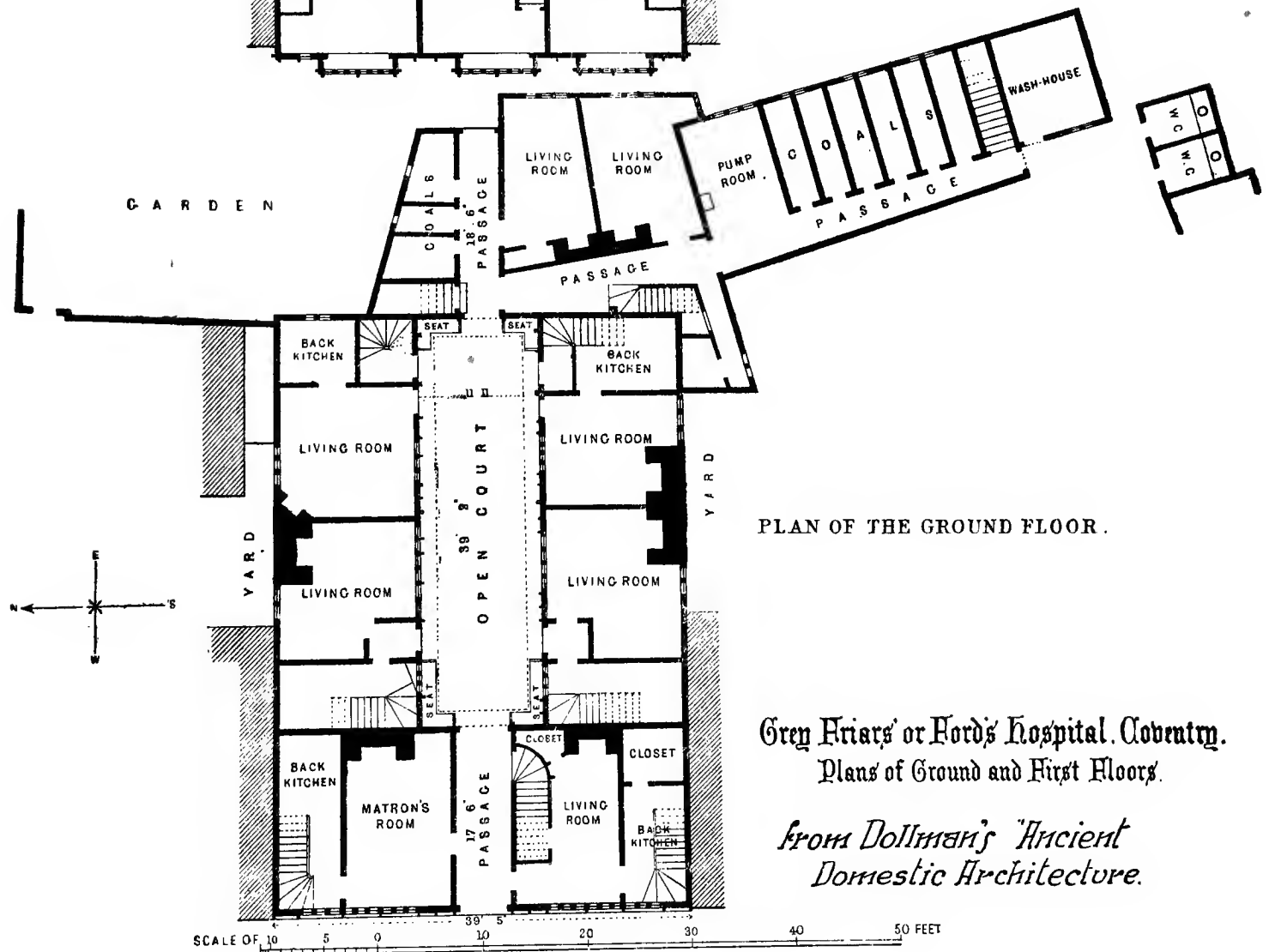
Ford's Hospital, or, as it is sometimes called, Grey Friar's Hospital, from its old-time proximity to the monastery of the Grey Friars, was erected in 1529 by William Ford, a native of the town, for five poor men and one woman, but the scope of the charity has been somewhat enlarged in recent years by providing for a number of out-pensioners. The original endowment was largely added to by the founder's executor, William Pitsford, and later by Simon Norton, an Alderman.

In Dugdale's *Warwickshire*, the foundation is thus referred to :—

"Grey Friars, near unto the ruins of this Friery, is there an Hospitall (now called Grey Frier Hospitall, in respect of its situation), touching the foundation whereof, and its successive benefactors, I shall not need to say anything more than what the inscription upon the walls there do declare :—' May the 4th, anno 1529, Mr. William Foud of this city, Merchant of the Staple, founded this almes-house for five men and one woman, and gave to each of them 5d. a week for their maintenance ; afterwards Mr. William Pisford, his executor, gave other lands, and



PLAN OF THE FIRST FLOOR.



PLAN OF THE GROUND FLOOR.

Grey Friars or Ford's Hospital, Coventry.
Plans of Ground and First Floors.

from Dollman's *"Ancient Domestic Architecture."*

SCALE OF 10 5 0 10 20 30 40 50 FEET

Old English Houses of Alms

appointed six men and their wives to be placed therein, and each couple to have 7½d. a week, and the nurse the same. And in the room of the sixth poor man and his wife, there shall be one honest good woman of the said city taken into the said Bede-house, which shall be about the age of forty, or betwixt forty and fifty, to be keeper of the said five poor men and their wives, as need shall require, to see them clean kept in their persons and houses, and for dressing their meat, washing of them, and ministering all things necessary to them.' The same William Wigston, also ordaining that when any of the women deceased before their husbands, the man was still to have the whole wages of 7½d., but if the husband died before the wife, she was to have but half the said stipend.

"In the seventh year of King James the First, the lands given to this hospitall were questioned as concealed from the crown (because by the will of the donor, there was appointed a yearly pension of £61, to maintain a priest to say mass two days in the week, and to pray for the souls of William Fourd, and Henry and William Pisford, and the souls of their wives), and were again purchased by the city, who have ever since maintained the charitable uses, with a great addition out of the chamber of the city.

"In the year 1621, the city added another man and woman at their own charge, so that there is now six couples besides the nurse, each couple being allowed 2s. weekly, and the nurse 1s. a week, although there be not any advance of rent in the city. Mr. Simon Norton, alderman of this city, gave towards the maintenance of one man and woman in this hospitall, for which the city doth allow 2s. a week also as the rest have, so that there is now seven couples and a nurse in this hospitall."

The plan of this building consists of an open central court in the form of a parallelogram (see plate) on either side of which are the abodes of the inmates, and an entrance passage, to the left of which on the ground and upper floors, are the apartments of the matron. Another passage leads to the gardens which are common to the little community.

The great value of this building to the architect lies in the fact that the whole edifice is practically co-eval in date, with the exception of the eastern end, which shows signs of a

Old English Houses of Alms

slight extension. Each dwelling has a separate stairway leading to the upper rooms. The room over the entrance doorway is thought to have been the chapel, so integral a feature of these old foundations, and some traces of old glass, together with some fragments of a panelled ceiling give support to this conjecture. The corresponding room at the eastern end of the court was originally the common hall of the institution, and the names and benefactions of various donors still remain inscribed on the walls. Both of these rooms are now used as living rooms for the inmates.

Externally the little building is just as fascinating, the west front being probably the most beautiful example of the English timbered house of the XVIth century we possess. The principal features are the three ranges of upper windows, which project boldly from the face of the wall, the gables having richly carved barge boards. Along the front a range of oak uprights form the constructional framing of the walls, the inter-spaces being filled in with lath and plaster. Each upright is ornamented by a small pinnacled buttress. Beneath the upper storey a projecting and coved string course extends the whole length of the building; and on the ground floor is a series of nine single-light windows in three bays, on each side of the principal doorway, which is placed in the centre of the edifice.

Among the other duties required of the warden or keeper of this institution was that of seeing the inmates "clean kept in their persons and houses, and for dressing their meats, washing of them, administering all things necessary to them."



Ford's Hospital, Coventry.

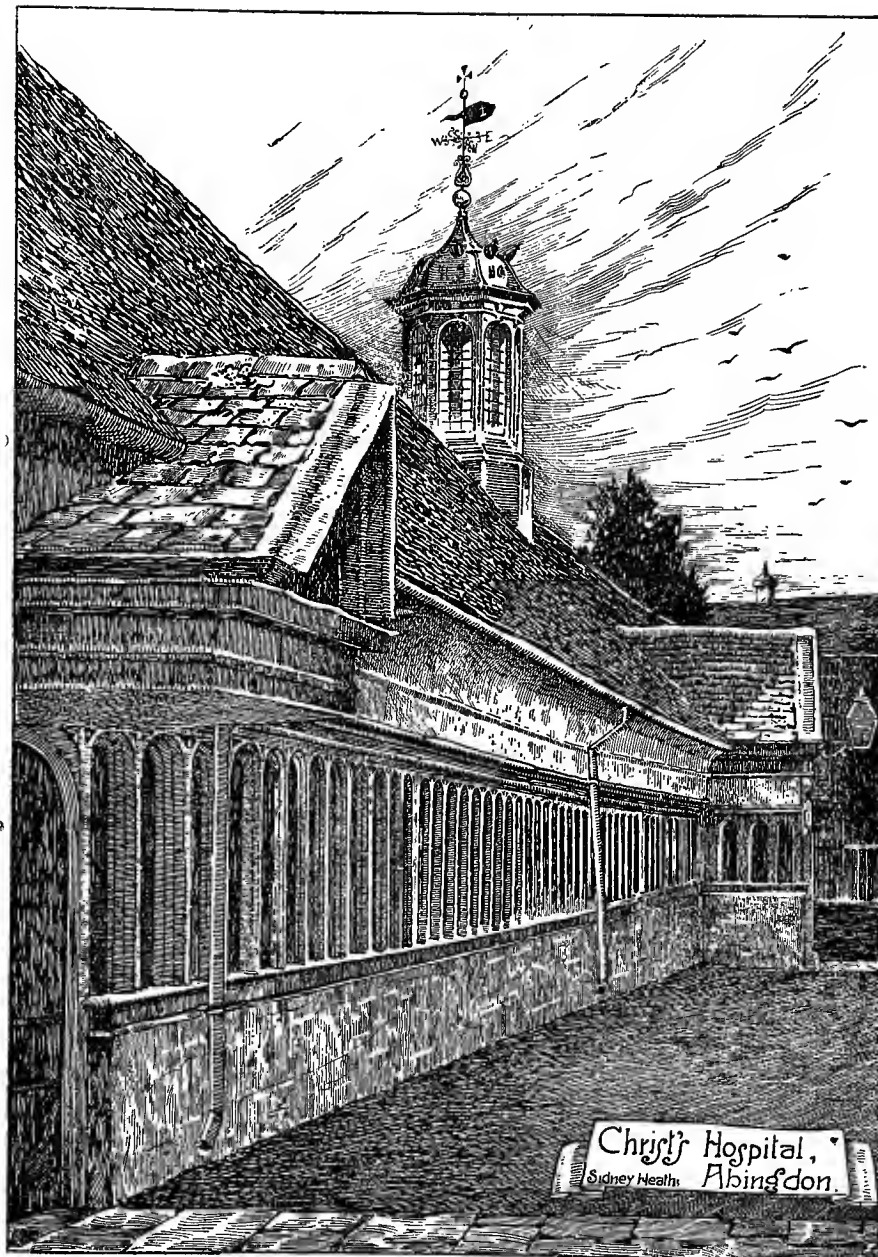
Christ's Hospital, Abingdon

Temp. EDWARD VI.

Christ's Hospital at Abingdon, in Berkshire, is one of those charitable institutions founded by the boy King Edward VI. It is really one of three old almshouses that surround the churchyard of St. Helen's Church. This institution was remodelled from the Guild of the Holy Rood, which had for many years been in a very flourishing condition. The inhabitants of the town did not suffer so much from the dissolution of the Abbey of Abingdon as might have been expected, for the monks had for some time fallen into dissolute habits, while all the good works formerly done by them were carried on by the Guild. Miss Clay tells us, in *English Mediæval Hospitals*, that of almshouses associated with guilds at Colchester, Stratford-on-Avon, and Abingdon, none survived save the last named, which was incorporated by Edward VI. This particular guild was that of St. Cross, and other guilds of this name were associated with charities at Colchester, Stratford-on-Avon, and Hedon.

The most distinctive architectural features of Christ's Hospital are the long range of wooden cloisters, and the tall lantern with a gilded vane rising from the centre of the roof. Within the cloisters are old oaken benches. In the panelled hall beneath the lantern hang portraits of Edward VI. and Sir John Mason, his co-founder in this charity. Among the treasures preserved in the Hospital is a curious old volume written by Master Francis Little in 1627. It bears the title *A Monument of Christian Munificence*, "wherein the Honourable memorie of the chiefe benefactours both of the ould Fraternitie of the Holy Crosse and the new foundation of the Hospital of Christ in Abingdon, in the Countie of Berks is registered, and immortalized to God's glorie and to their everlasting praise and for the inviting of posteritie to ye imitation of their charitable bountie."

The book is an account of the life of Sir John Mason. One of the early governors of the Hospital was William Lee, whose portrait and genealogical tree hangs in the St. Catherine aisle of the parish church.



Waldron's Almshouses, Tiverton

1579.

This picturesque set of almshouses in Wellbrook Street, Tiverton, was erected by John Waldron, a wealthy merchant of Tiverton, who died shortly after the building was commenced. The Charity was for the support of eight aged poor men, who received, as do their successors to-day, two shillings each per week, eight shillings yearly as milk money, and twelve and sixpence as a New Year's gift.

The building has a little open gallery or arcade, along the front. The attached chapel has an entrance porch which exhibits so many points of similarity, both as regards general construction and architectural detail with the Greenway example, founded some fifty-two years earlier, that one is led to conclude that if they were not the work of the same hands, the design of the earlier foundation had a considerable influence on the artificers of the later one. The spandrils of the arched doorway contain shields on which is the monogram and merchant's mark of John Waldron, as do the series of shields placed along the top. The whole of the edifice, in fact, is covered with these personal devices of the founder *ad nauseam*. The highly-wrought panel above the massive dripstone contains the arms of England and France quarterly, within the Garter.

John Waldron did not live to see the building completed, as is recorded by the following inscription on the walls:—

“ John Waldron and Richoard his wyfe
Builded this house in tyme of their lyfe,
At such tyme as the walls were fourteyne foot hye,
He departed this worlde, even the eightynth of July (1579).”

Below the main cornice is this inscription:—

“ Since youth and lyfe doth pass awaye,
And death at hand to end our dayes,
Let us do so that men may saye,
We spent our goods God for to prays.”

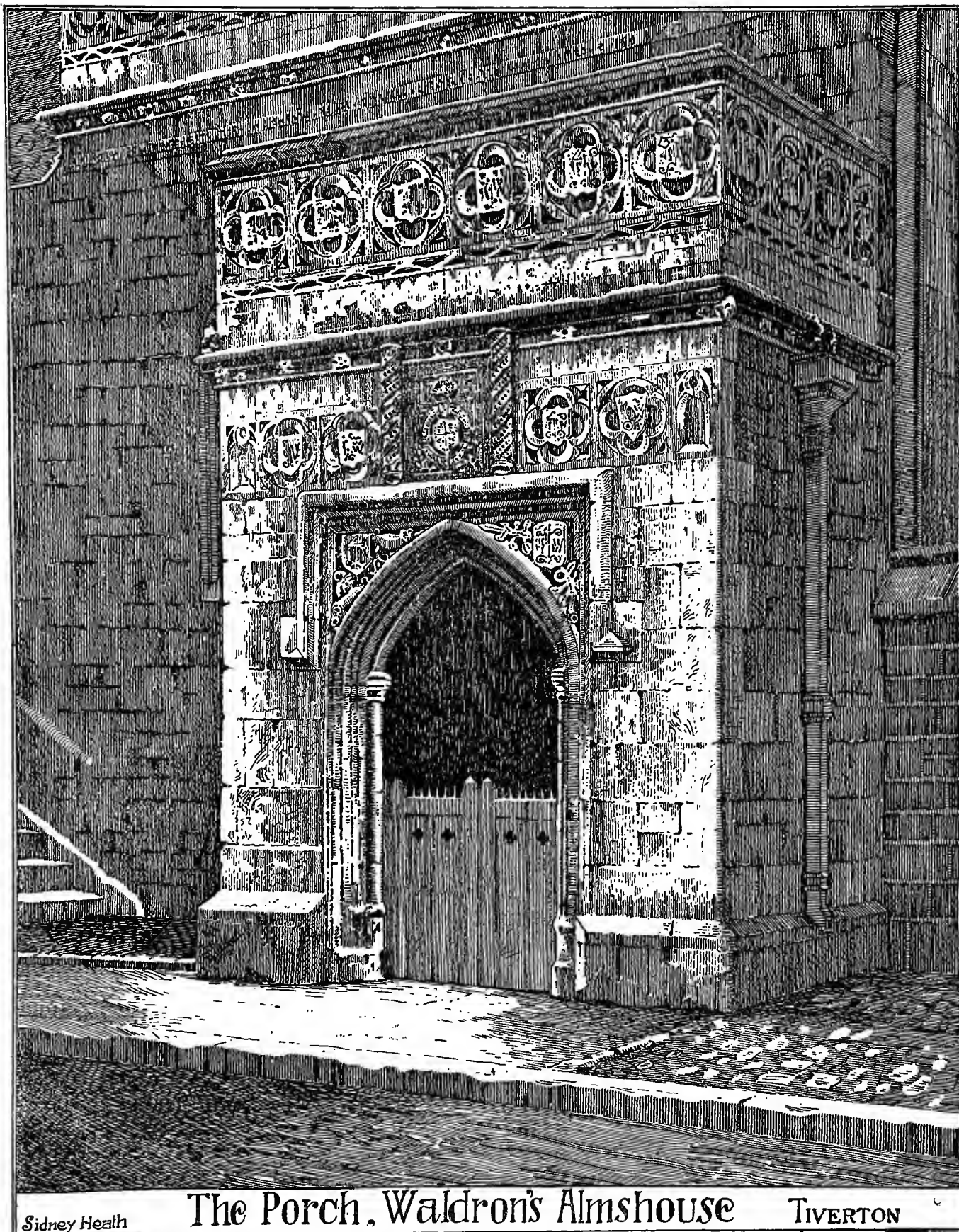
On other portions of the wall we read:—

“ He that upon the poor doth spend,
The goods that he hath here,
So God again the same doth send,
And pay the same with great increase.
Depart thy goods whilst thou hast tyme,
For after death they are not thyne.
Remember the Poor.”

The tomb of John Waldron, ornamented with bold Renaissance sculpture lies in the chancel of Tiverton Church, but the inscription given as follows by Westcote, is almost obliterated:—

“ Here lieth John Waldron, Merchant of Tiverton,
Founder of the Almshouses by West Exe.”

Tiverton has yet a third set of old charities in the little humble dwellings erected in 1613 for poor women, out of a benefaction left by George Slee, a merchant and native of the town.



Sidney Heath

The Porch, Waldron's Almshouse

TIVERTON

The Poor Traveller's Rest, Rochester

1579.

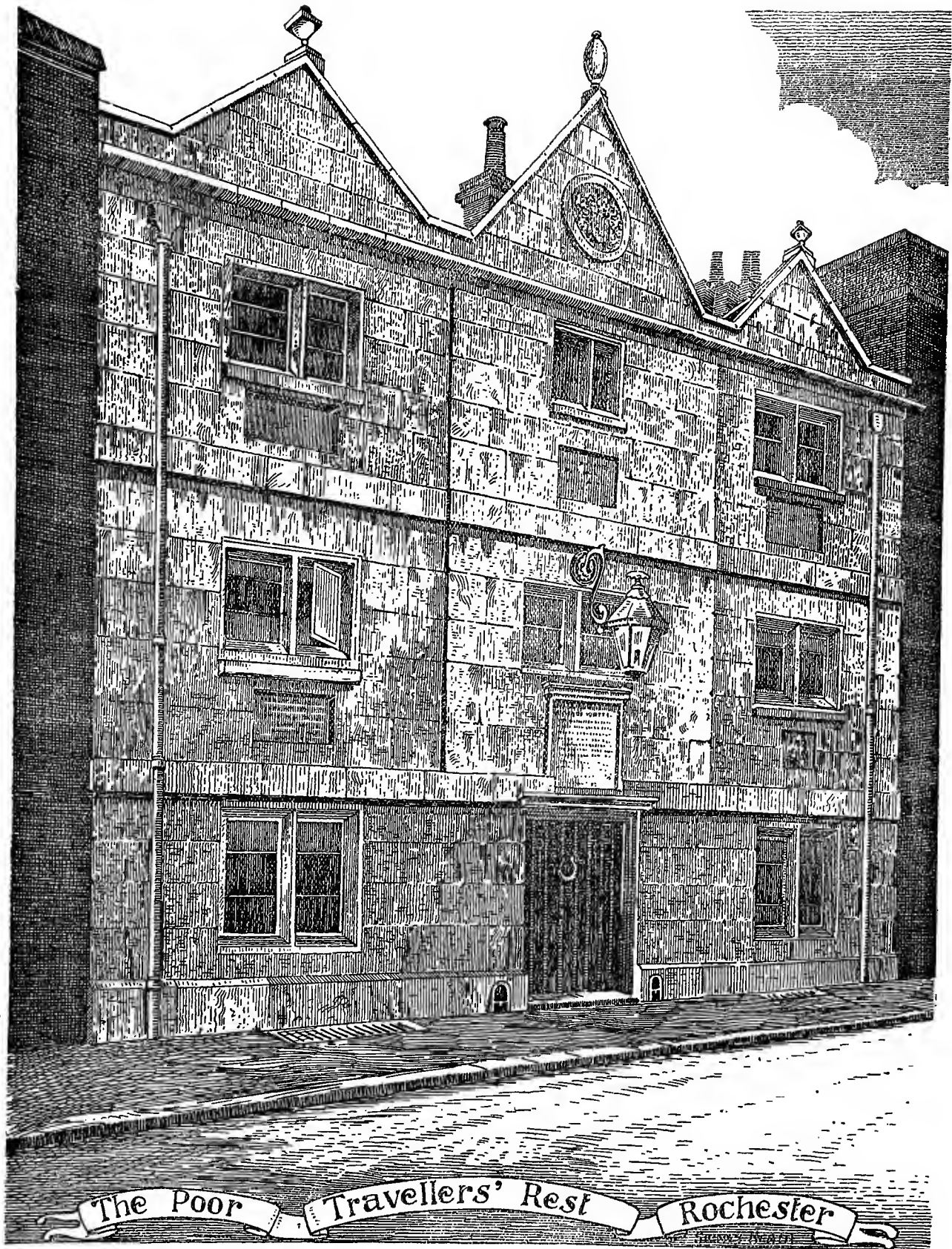
On the north side of the narrow High Street of Rochester stands the house immortalised by Charles Dickens in one of the Christmas numbers of *Household Words*. The front of the building has been somewhat restored, but the gallery, occupying one side of an open space at the rear, erected for the comfort of the poor wayfarers, is part of the original foundation.

As is recorded by the inscription on one of the numerous tablets on the building, one of the worthy Mayors of Rochester endeavoured to perpetuate the memory of the founder :

RICHARD WATTS, ESQR.,
BY HIS WILL DATED 22 AUG., 1579,
FOUNDED THIS CHARITY
FOR SIX POOR TRAVELLERS
WHO NOT BEING ROGUES OR PROCTORS
MAY RECEIVE GRATIS, FOR ONE NIGHT,
LODGING, ENTERTAINMENT,
AND FOUR PENCE EACH.
IN TESTIMONY OF HIS MUNIFICENCE,
IN HONOUR OF HIS MEMORY,
AND INDUCEMENT TO HIS EXAMPLE,
NATHL. HOOD, ESQ., THE PRESENT MAYOR,
HAS CAUSED THIS STONE,
GRATEFULLY TO BE RENEWED
AND INSCRIBED
A.D. 1771.

In his story of the "Seven Poor Travellers" Charles Dickens says: "I found it to be a clean white house, of a staid and venerable air, with a quaint old door already three times mentioned (an arched door), a choice little long low lattice window, and a roof of three gables."

The seventh poor traveller was then taken over the house by the good woman who waited on the wayfarers. "Howbeit, I kept my thoughts to myself, and accompanied the presence to the little galleries at the back. I found them on a tiny scale, like the galleries in old inn-yards ; and they were very clean. While I was looking at them the matron gave me to understand that the prescribed number of Poor Travellers were forthcoming every night from year's end to year's end; and that the beds were always occupied. My question upon this and her replies, brought us back to the Board Room so essential to the dignity of 'the gentlemen,' where she showed me the printed accounts of the charity hanging up by the window. From them I gathered that the greater part of the



Old English Houses of Alms

property bequeathed by the Worshipful Master Richard Watts for the maintenance of this foundation was, at the time of his death, mere marsh-land; but that, in course of time, it had been reclaimed and built upon, and was very considerably increased in value. I found, too, that about a thirteenth part of the annual revenue was now expended on the purposes commemorated in the inscription over the door; the rest being handsomely laid out in Chancery, law expenses, collectors' tips, receiverships, poundage, and other appendages of management, highly complimentary to the importance of the Six Poor Travellers. In short, I made the not entirely new discovery that it may be said of an establishment like this, in dear old England, as of the fat oyster in the American story, that it takes a good many men to swallow it whole.

It was in the cosy kitchen, it will be remembered, that this seventh Poor Traveller entertained his fellow wanderers on a certain Christmas Eve to a supper of turkey, beef, and hot wassail; from which goodly cheer, as it was being carried from the neighbouring inn, there arose in the quaint old streets of Rochester, a fragrance so savoury as to cause the public to stop, and sniff in wonder.

Among the things to be seen in this interesting old house is an autograph of Charles Dickens with that of his companion, Mark Lemon.

Jesus Hospital, Rothwell

1591.

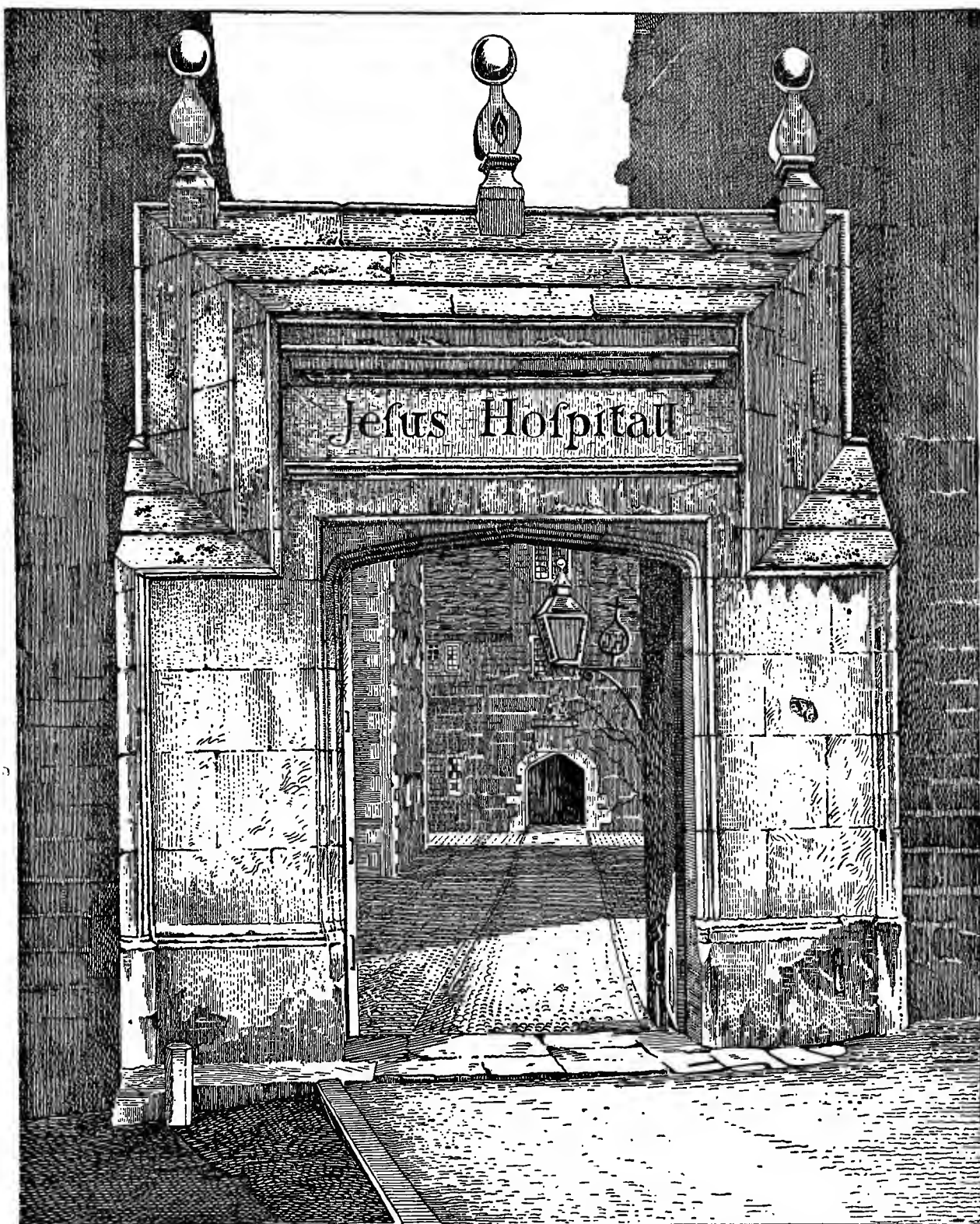
Jesus Hospital at Rothwell, near Kettering, Northants, was founded in 1591, by Owen Ragdale, a schoolmaster. The buildings enclose a small quadrangular court, entered by a delightful and massively-built gateway.

Above the arch is a kind of recessed panel on which appears, in sweetly-cut lettering, the simple inscription, "JEFUS HOFPITALL."

Between twenty and thirty men receive, in addition to free lodging and clothing, ten shillings a week each from the provided funds. Each inmate has a small garden, the adjoining orchard being the common property of the community.

All that the pious schoolmaster asked in return for these very substantial benefits, was that those who enjoyed them would "have a special care and regard that his tomb in Rothwell Church, and the epitaphs, superscriptions, walls, pavements, and other things therewith annexed, should be kept whole, safe, bright, and clean."

At Kettering, a few miles away, are some almshouses in the form of a group of one-storeyed cottages, founded in 1688, by Edward Sawyer, whose coat of arms appears over the doorway of the central cottage.



Sidney Heath

Jesus Hospital, Rothwell.

The Whitgift Hospital, Croydon

1596.

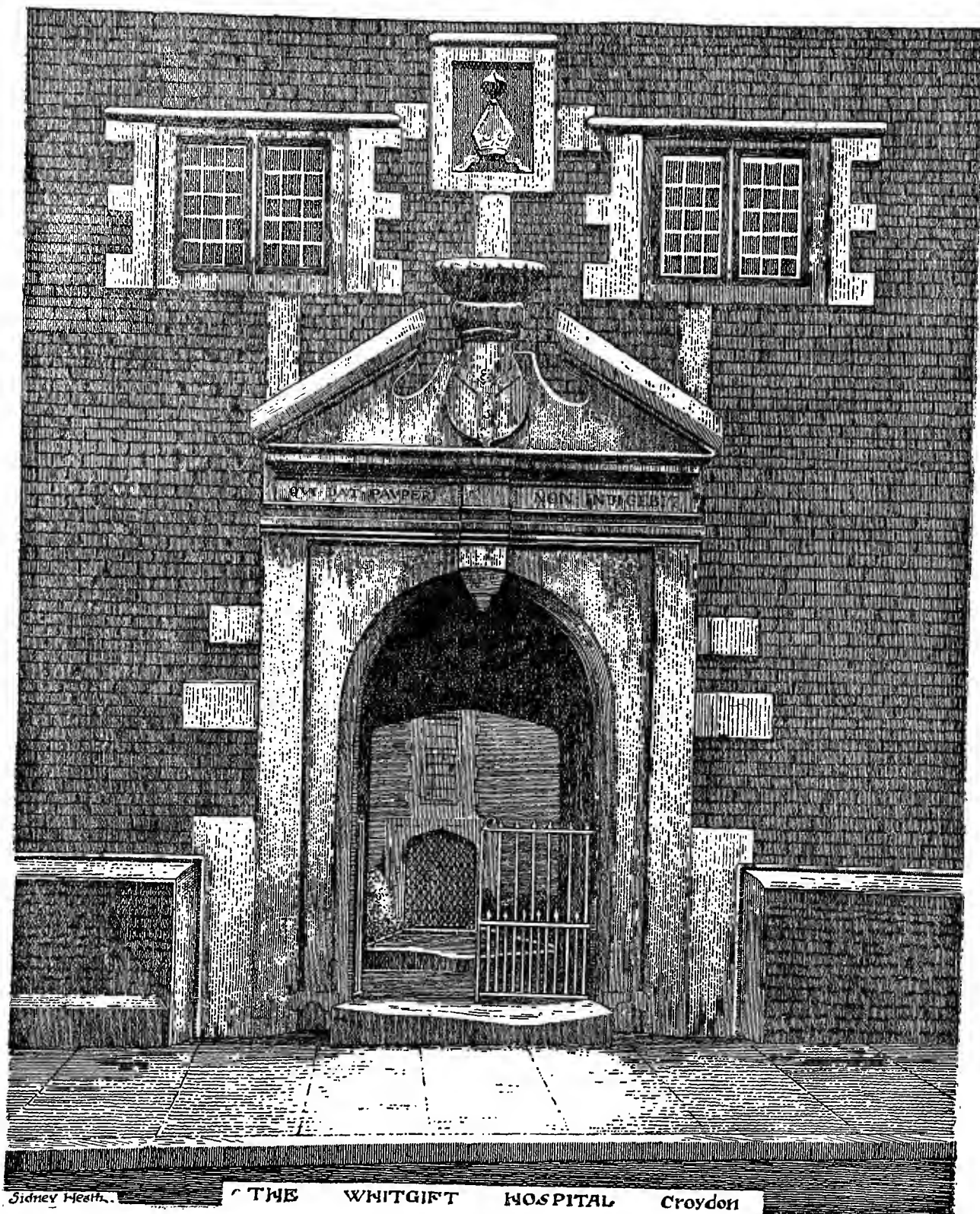
The foundation stone of Holy Trinity, or, as it is more commonly called, the Whitgift Hospital, at Croydon, was laid in 1596, twenty-three years before George Abbot's stately foundation at Guildford was commenced.

The Croydon charity, dedicated by the founder to "the poor brethren and poor sisters" of Croydon, was completed during the archbishop's lifetime, he being unwilling, as he informed Stow, to be "a cause of their damnation," to his executors. The building, quadrangular in plan, is built of red brick. The external gable of the west front exhibits the initials I.W., the arms of the founder and of the See of Canterbury, and an archbishop's mitre, placed within a small recessed panel between two small windows. Cut on the entrance doorway is the appropriate motto, "*Qui dat pauperi non indigebit*" (He who giveth to the poor shall not want). Strype, in his *Annals*, calls it "this memorable and charitable structure of brick and stone, one of the most notable monuments founded in these times, for a harbour and subsistence for the poor."

Like its younger sister at Guildford, this hospital has retained practically the whole of its original doors, benches, tables, and other furniture. There is also some very fine panelling, and an excellent Jacobean mantelpiece.

The chapel, situated in the south-east corner of the quadrangle, is a small plain building, the east window of which displays the arms of Whitgift and of Canterbury. At the west end is a portrait of the founder, and one of an unknown lady which certain guide book writers will insist on describing as the archbishop's daughter, notwithstanding that Whitgift was a life-long bachelor. The old dining hall has its original panelling, furniture, and fitments, some fragments of old glass, and a number of documents relating to the foundation. Most of the old mullioned windows of the courtyard, and all but one of the chimneys, have been so tampered with at various times that little of the Elizabethan brick and stone work of these particular portions remain.

Whitgift was one of the most learned of the reformed archbishops. He had been master first of Pembroke and then of Trinity College, Cambridge. His reputation as a preacher caused him to be commanded to preach at Court, when Elizabeth is said to have expressed her satisfaction with the remark that this was a "White Gift" indeed; and somewhat later in his career her majesty was pleased to call him, with the facetiousness

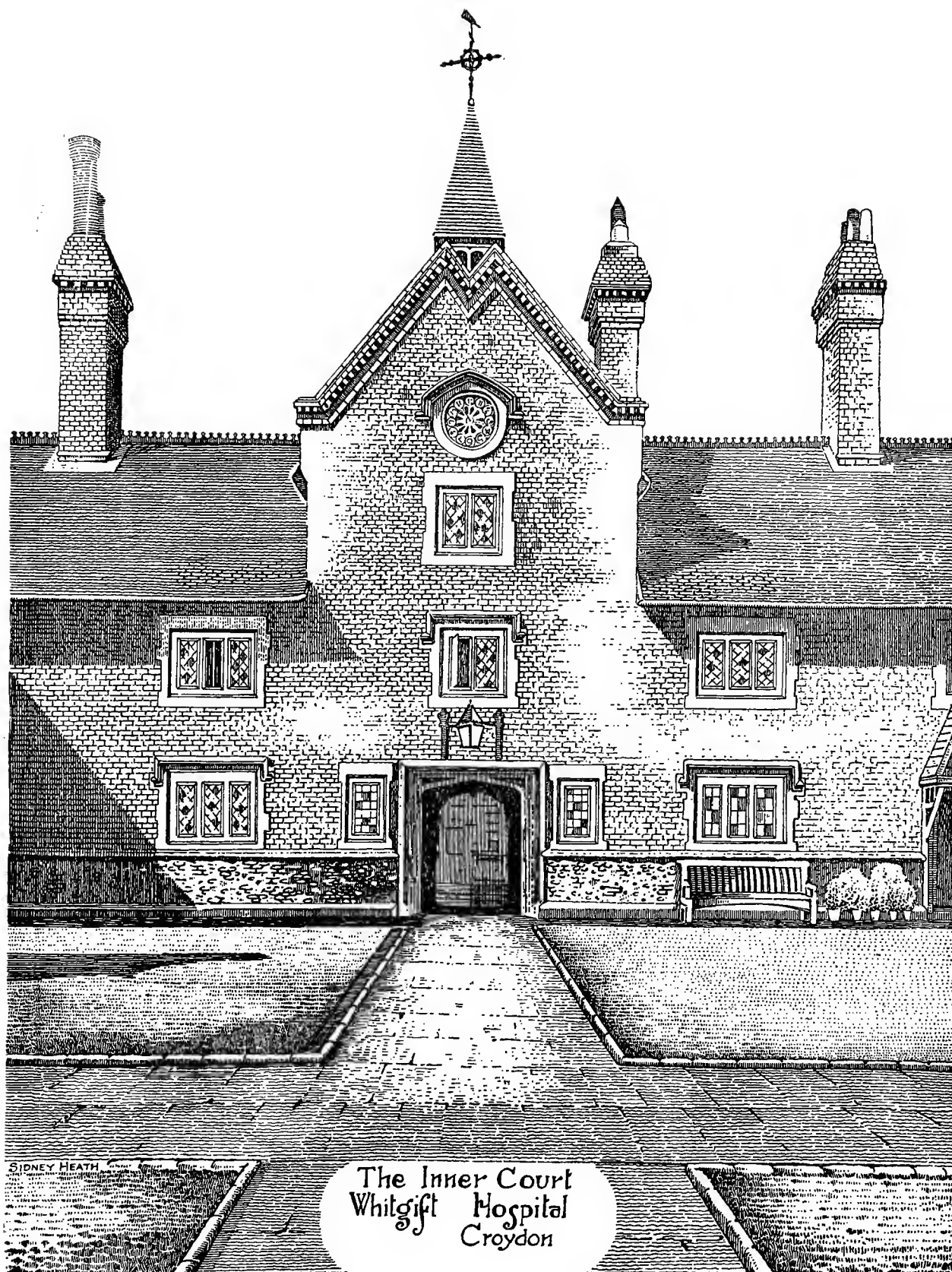


Sidney Heath.

THE WHITGIFT HOSPITAL Croydon

Old English Houses of Alms

allowed to royal and elderly maidenhood, her "black husband." The tomb of Whitgift is in the parish church of Croydon. The original, with the exception of a few fragments, had been destroyed by fire, and the present monument, restored by Mr. Oldrid Scott, was unveiled by Archbishop Benson in 1888. Whitgift, however, needs no other monument than his Hospital of the Holy Trinity, and it is satisfactory to record that, at the moment of penning these lines, the authorities of Croydon have decided, although by a narrow majority of four, not to proceed with the demolition of this excellent Elizabethan building. In a year that has witnessed the removal of Crosby Hall and the destruction of the famous Colonnade at Bath, it is gratifying to note that for many years at least, for as long as its bricks hold together let us hope, the one building left to redeem the dull monotony of modern Croydon, will be spared the fate that, in this essentially commercial age, has overtaken a host of buildings, historically of more importance, but none of them more worthy to rank among the great charitable institutions, and the architectural achievements of the spacious times of Queen Elizabeth, as this hospice founded by the great archbishop for the poor brothers and sisters of his native place.



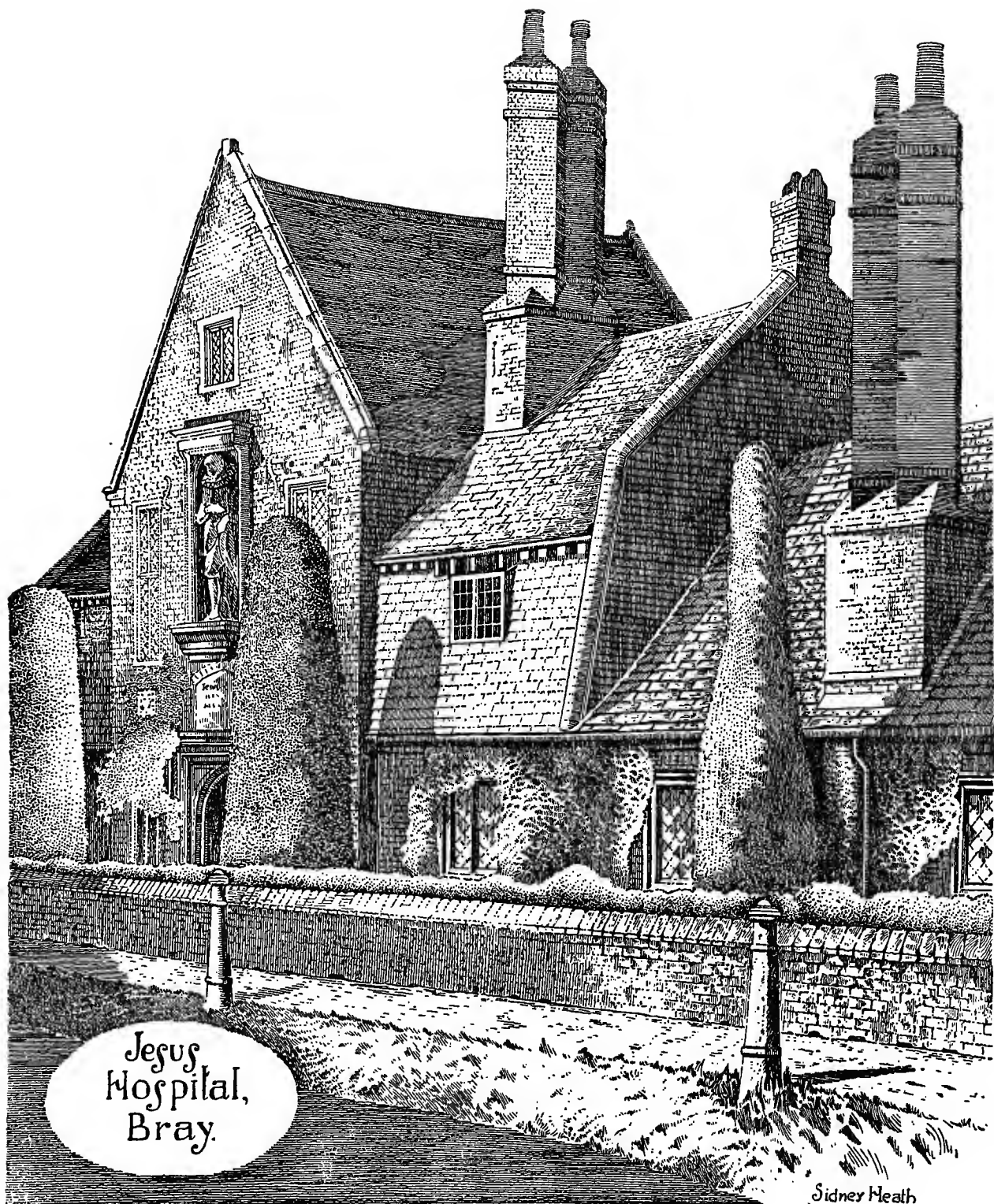
The Inner Court
Whitgift Hospital
Croydon

Jesus Hospital, Bray

1609.

Jesus Hospital at Bray, near Maidenhead, was founded in 1609, by William Goddard, who died about the end of the same year. The testator stipulated that the outer walls of the building should be of brick, and that there should be rooms "fit and convenient" for forty people to dwell in; together with a chapel for Divine worship. There was also to be a bakehouse and a kitchen, common to the whole community. The charity is controlled by the Company of Fishmongers, pursuant to the will of the founder, who directed that the wardens should nominate and choose forty poor men and women, whereof six should be chosen from the most aged freemen and freewomen of the said Company, and thirty-four from among the poorest parishioners of Bray, having resided there for a period of twenty years and being not less than fifty years of age. In addition to small weekly money payments, coal and wood, clothing in the form of a coat for men and a "camlet gown" for the women, is given every second year. The plan of the building is of the usual quadrangle type, enclosing a courtyard laid out with walks and cultivated plots. A large effigy of the founder, in doublet, hose, and ruff, appears over the main entrance to the almshouses.

The view of these buildings from the quadrangle is said to have formed the basis for the background of the late Fred Walker's fine picture, "The Harbour of Refuge," now in the Tate Gallery.



Jesus
Hospital,
Bray.

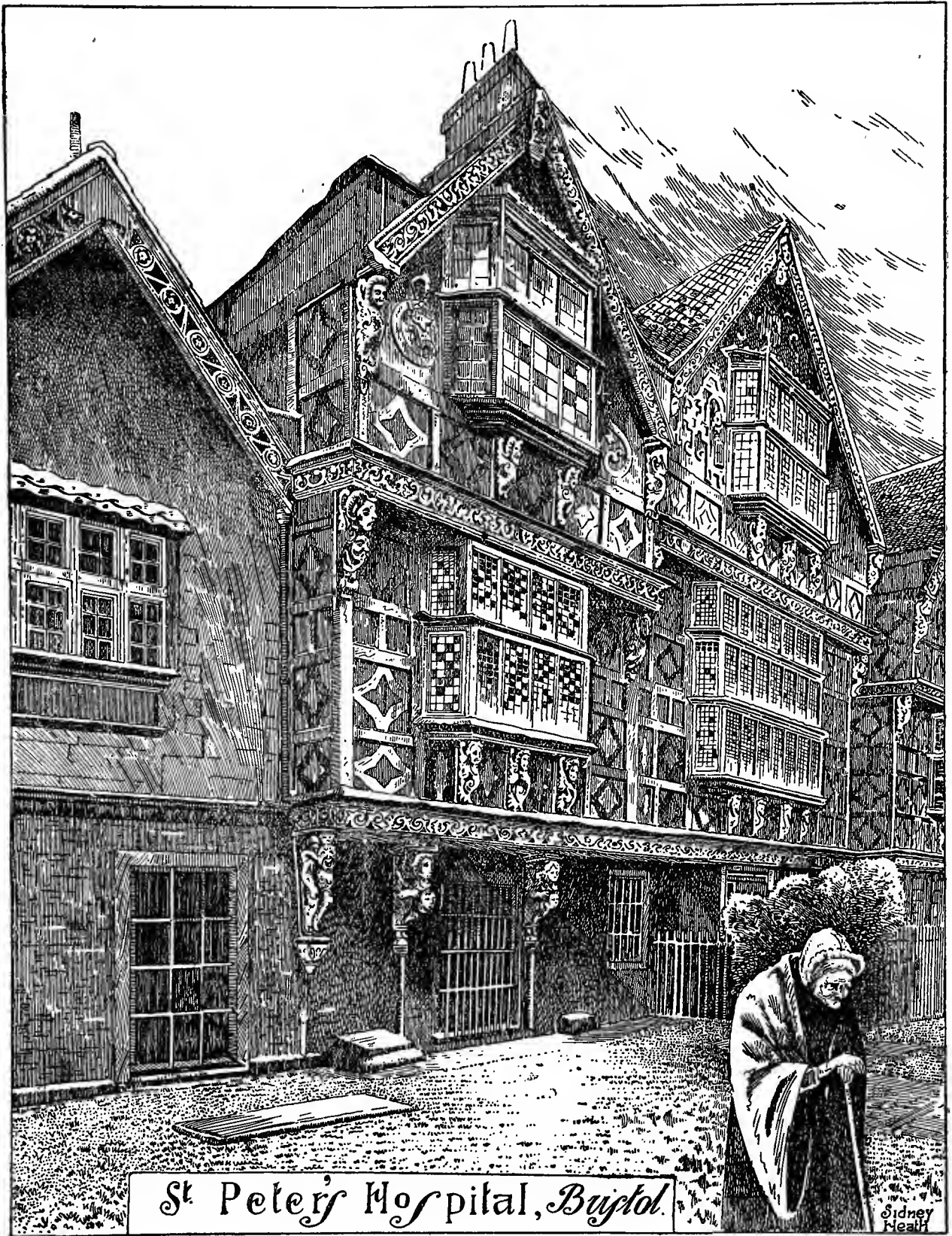
Sidney Heath

St. Peter's Hospital, Bristol

1612.

This is one of the most interesting specimens of ancient domestic architecture remaining in Bristol. The original mansion is thought to have been erected about the close of the 12th century by John Norton, when the building covered all the ground from S. Peter's churchyard to the river. It remained in the possession of the Nortons for several centuries, and in 1435 it was bequeathed by Thomas Norton to his two sons, Thomas and Walker, by whom it was divided into two tenements. Walter is said to have resided in the western portion of the building, and Thomas in the eastern portion. The latter is believed to be the same Thomas Norton who had the reputation of being one of the most famous alchemists of his day, but who nevertheless died in poverty. The Nortons continued to reside here until 1580, when Sir George Norton, who had become possessed of the whole property, sold it to Henry Newton, afterwards Sir Henry Newton, of Barr's Court, but neither the purchaser nor any of his family appear to have resided here. The next known owner is stated to have been (1602) Robert Chambers, by whom it was sold to Robert Aldworth, a wealthy merchant, in 1607. This gentleman's monogram may still be seen, together with the date 1612, on the front of the house facing the river. Aldworth made considerable alterations in the premises, and appears to have largely re-built the house in the style (Jacobean) of the period, for a contemporary deed states that it was "by the said Robert Aldworth erected and new built."

The street frontage with gables enriched with arabesque ornament belongs to this date (1612), while the court room is an addition of the same period. In S. Peter's Church adjoining there is a very fine tomb to the memory of Robert Aldworth, who died in 1634. Although the principal part of the house was re-constructed by Aldworth, a portion of the churchyard frontage (see plate) towards the east is part of the original home of the Nortons. After Aldworth's death it was in the occupation of various families, and then became appropriated for trade purposes, being first used in such capacity as a sugar house, when it was thus referred to by Evelyn, "Here I first saw the method of refining sugar and casting it into loaves." In 1696, when the coinage at the Tower was supplemented by the establishment of branch mints in several provincial towns, the civic authorities pressed the claims of Bristol for the honour, but being informed that



St Peter's Hospital, Bristol.

Sidney
Heath

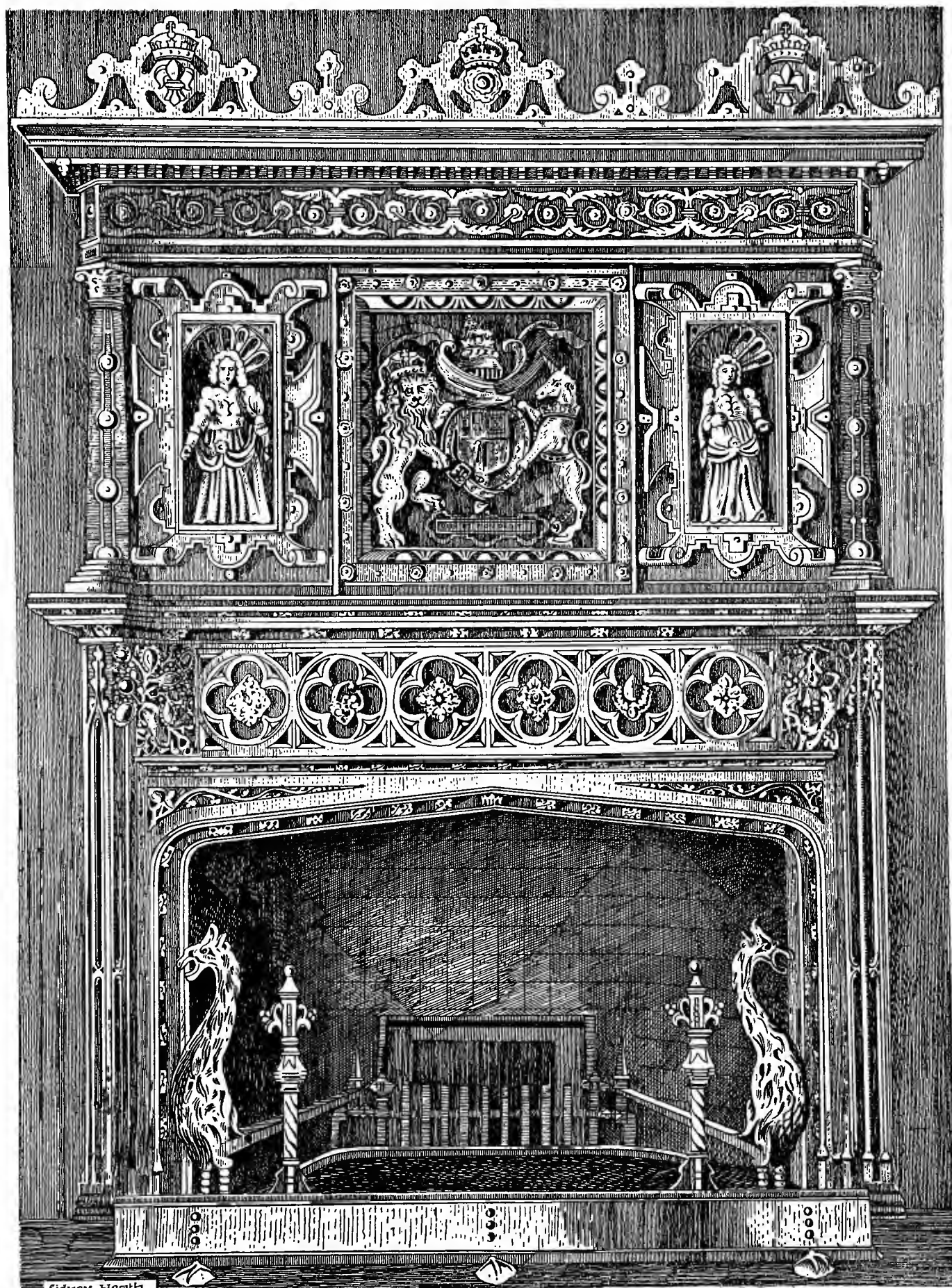
Old English Houses of Alms

provision of a suitable house was essential, it is recorded that the Corporation appointed a Committee "to make a bargain with Sir Thomas Day for the Sugar House, and the house will find the way to pay the rent." The bargain having been made, the building was used as a mint from 1696 to 1698, when the coining of money out of London was prohibited as being an infringement of the king's prerogative.

At the last named date the building passed to the present owners, then known as the Corporation of the Poor, and the first Board of Guardians formed in England, being established under a special Act of Parliament passed in 1696. They paid Edward Colston and other interested persons £800, and converted the building into a kind of house for the poor, when the beautiful Jacobean sitting-room fitted up by Aldworth, was utilised by the guardians as their board or meeting room, since which time it has been used continuously for this purpose. It is a beautiful apartment. The plaster ceiling is constructed in square and diamond shaped compartments, filled in with floral and other devices, while the deep cornice has a running series of armorial shields supported by griffins. For centuries this was all covered with whitewash, but some twenty years ago the encrustation was removed, and the ceiling emblazoned with heraldic and other colours, in supposed accordance with the original decoration.

The apartment is roofed above the ceiling with a very fine 15th century open timber roof, which may have been the canopy of the great hall of the earlier mansion before its reconstruction in 1612, when it was doubtless shorn of a portion of its length. The guardians now occupy the entire premises for administrative purposes only, and the old board room proving too small for their greatly increased work, a new one has been erected in the S.W. portion of this interesting old house.

The elaborate chimney-piece, of which an illustration is given, shows a curious blending of late Gothic with Jacobean ornament. The upper portion no doubt was added on to the old Gothic base at the time Aldworth renovated the room. The large brass fire dogs and the grate are worthy of attention.



Sidney Heath

Chimney-piece in *St Peter's Hospital* Bristol

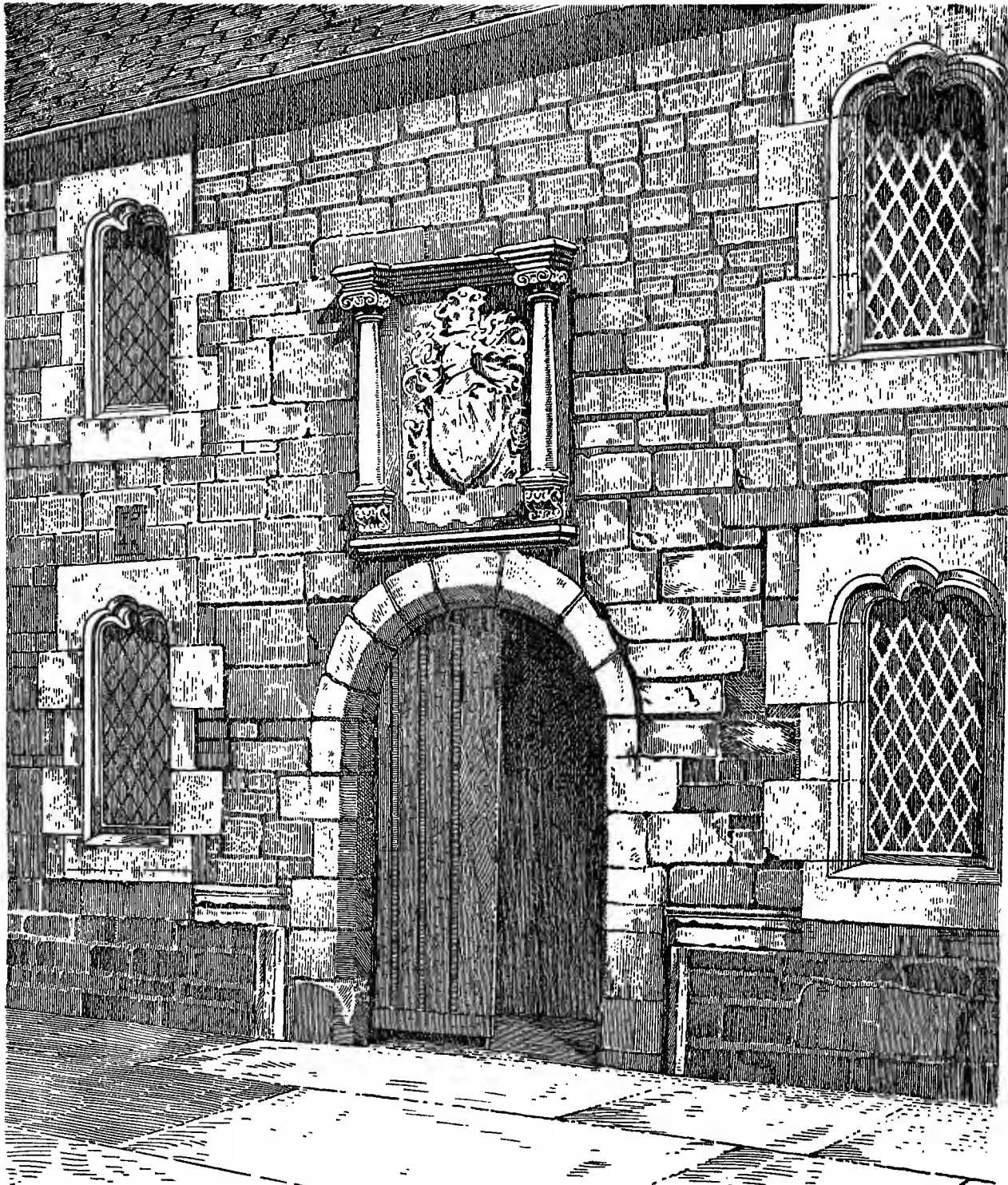
Coningsby's Hospital, Hereford

1614.

Hereford, like so many of our old cathedral cities, has a large number of old hospitals and almshouses, but unlike the majority of these centres of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the city of Hereford has retained in an unusual degree the original intentions of the founders and the buildings as originally erected by her pious citizens in the past. Prominent among these is the hospital erected in 1614 by Sir Thomas Coningsby on the site of a foundation of the Knights Hospitallers, for the reception of eleven poor old soldiers or mariners, "of three years' service at least in the wars, or at sea, or serving men of seven years' service." The buildings, in the form of a quadrangle, comprise twelve apartments, a chapel, refectory and offices. The chapel was restored in 1886, when the old woodwork was cleared away, with the exception of a canopied oak pew, used by the Commander of the Hospital. A stained glass window displays the arms of the founder, while on the walls are various heraldic charges, carved in stone and coloured, of the Coningsbys. At the west end of the chapel a small arcaded lattice, with a sliding panel, communicates with the infirmary. Over the door by which the building is entered are two Ionic pillars framing a tablet whereon is a piece of sculpture showing the founder's arms, crest, and mantling. The original great gateway has been built up, and now forms part of a house.

Sir Thomas Coningsby founded this hospital in testimony of his gratitude to Providence for preserving him in his travels by land and sea, as well as against malice at home. It was to provide for a chaplain and eleven old soldiers or mariners; at the head of whom should be an old soldier of the name of Coningsby, who was to be called the Corporal of Coningsby's Company of Old Servitors, and styled in all their speeches and writings Commander of the Hospital. Touching the apparel of the old servitors, he ordered that each should have, when admitted, "a fustian suit of ginger colour, of a soldier-like fashion, seemingly laced, a soldier-like jerkin with half sleeves, and a square shirt, down half the thigh, with a moncado, or Spanish cap, a soldier-like sword, with a belt to wear as he goeth abroad, a cloake of red cloth lined with red baize, to be worn in the hospital and city of Hereford"; the cloak to be worn in more distant walks and journeys. Whenever the Company went to the Cathedral or other public place, the chaplain and corporal were to march at their head, the servitors following two abreast.

The inmates of the hospital may still be seen marching through the quaint old streets of Hereford, the Commander leading the way, the Servitors following two abreast, and giving, with their red cloaks and Spanish caps, a touch of colour amid the sombre shadows of the Cathedral city.



Coningsby's Hospital, Hereford

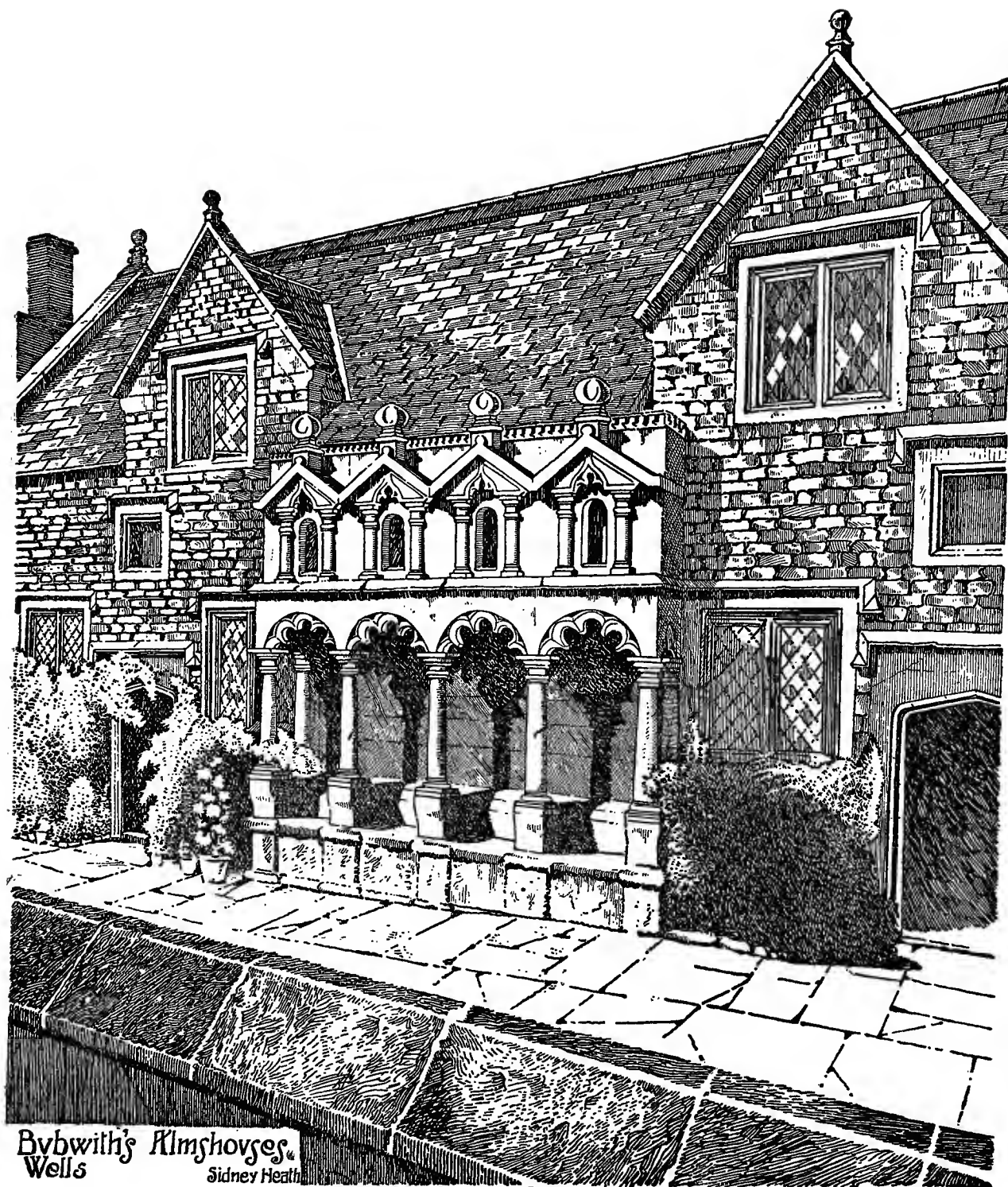
Sidney Heath

Bubwith's Almshouse, Wells

1436-1615.

The cathedral city of Wells possesses some six or seven sets of charities, many of which were founded by various bishops of the diocese. One of the most important of these is the little building near St. Cuthbert's Gate, known as Bishop Bubwith's Almshouse, built by his executors in 1436, some twelve years after the prelate's death in 1424. The charity was for the relief of men so poor that they were forced to beg for a living, and so decrepit that they were physically incapable of asking alms from door to door. Provision was also made for reduced burgesses of the city, who were given increased comforts, such as the softest beds, etc. Bubwith, who was Treasurer of England under Henry IV., did not live, as we have seen, to witness the completion of his almshouse. To this bishop is due the north-west tower of Wells Cathedral, with its beautiful screens. His chantry is in the Cathedral. The original plan was of the usual mediæval type, a large hall open to the roof, with cubicles on each side for the inmates, and a chapel¹. Bubwith's original building was much tampered with in 1850, but the ancient plan may still be traced. A fine old doorway has survived, but the canopied and crocketed niche above it has been cut off flush with the walls. The most interesting architectural portion of the existing edifice is an addition made from a bequest by Bishop Still *obit* 1607. It consists of a remarkable cinque-cento sedilia on the south side of the almshouse (see plate). Curiously enough, Still, like his brother founder, did not live to see his bequest take architectural form, as the addition for which he made the bequest was not finished until 1615, eight years after the donor's death.

¹ "The Hospitale and the Chapelle is builded al in lenth under one Roofe." (Leland.)



Bybwith's Almshouses
Wells

Sidney Heath

Napper's Mite, Dorchester

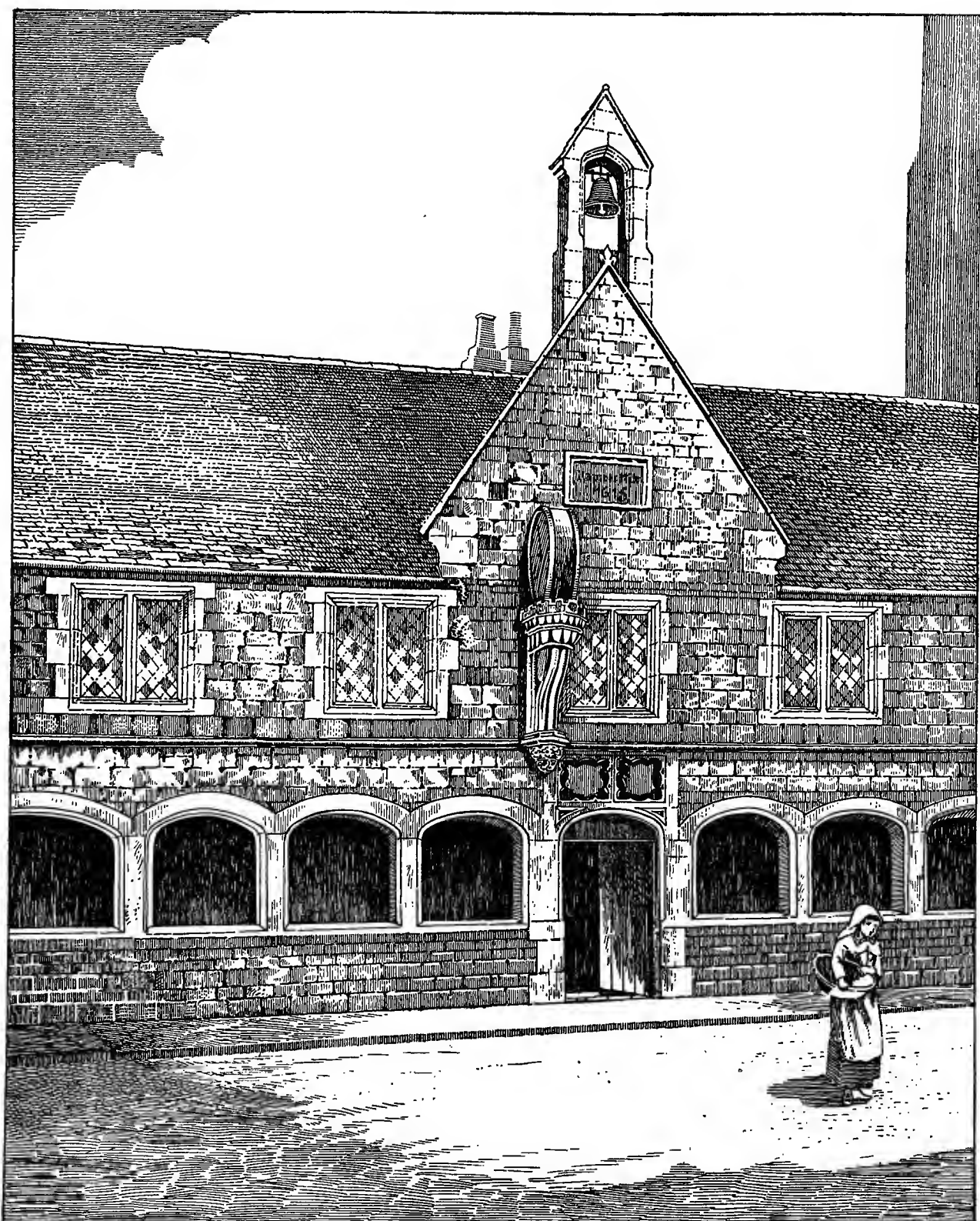
1615.

This is a charming little building situated in South Street, Dorchester, the ancient Durnovaria of Dorset. It was erected and endowed in 1615 by Sir Robert Napper or Napier, of Middlemarsh Hall. Externally the building shows a slender turret containing one bell, and a picturesque arcade or open gallery along the entire front. The original foundation comprised ten apartments, and a chapel, in which the senior brother was appointed to read the prayers and conduct Divine Service every morning and evening. The ten apartments remain, but the chapel is now used as a storeroom, on the wall of which is a slab bearing the Napper arms and the inscription :—

LA MITE NAPPIER,
BUILT TO THE HONOUR OF GOD
BIE SIR ROBERT NAPPER, KNIGHT,
ANN
XENODOCHIU

This slab once occupied a prominent position on the exterior wall, and the last word, signifying in Greek, "a hospital for strangers," also contains the date of the foundation, MDCXV.

Within the little cloistered gallery is a stairway leading to a large room on the second floor, possibly the old common room of the brethren. The stone bracket supporting the clock has been copied from a similar design at the old George Inn at Glastonbury. This little compact building is occupied by ten old men of sixty years of age or upwards, who each receive, in addition to free quarters, six shillings a week. The institution is controlled entirely by Lord Alington, a direct descendant of its pious founder.



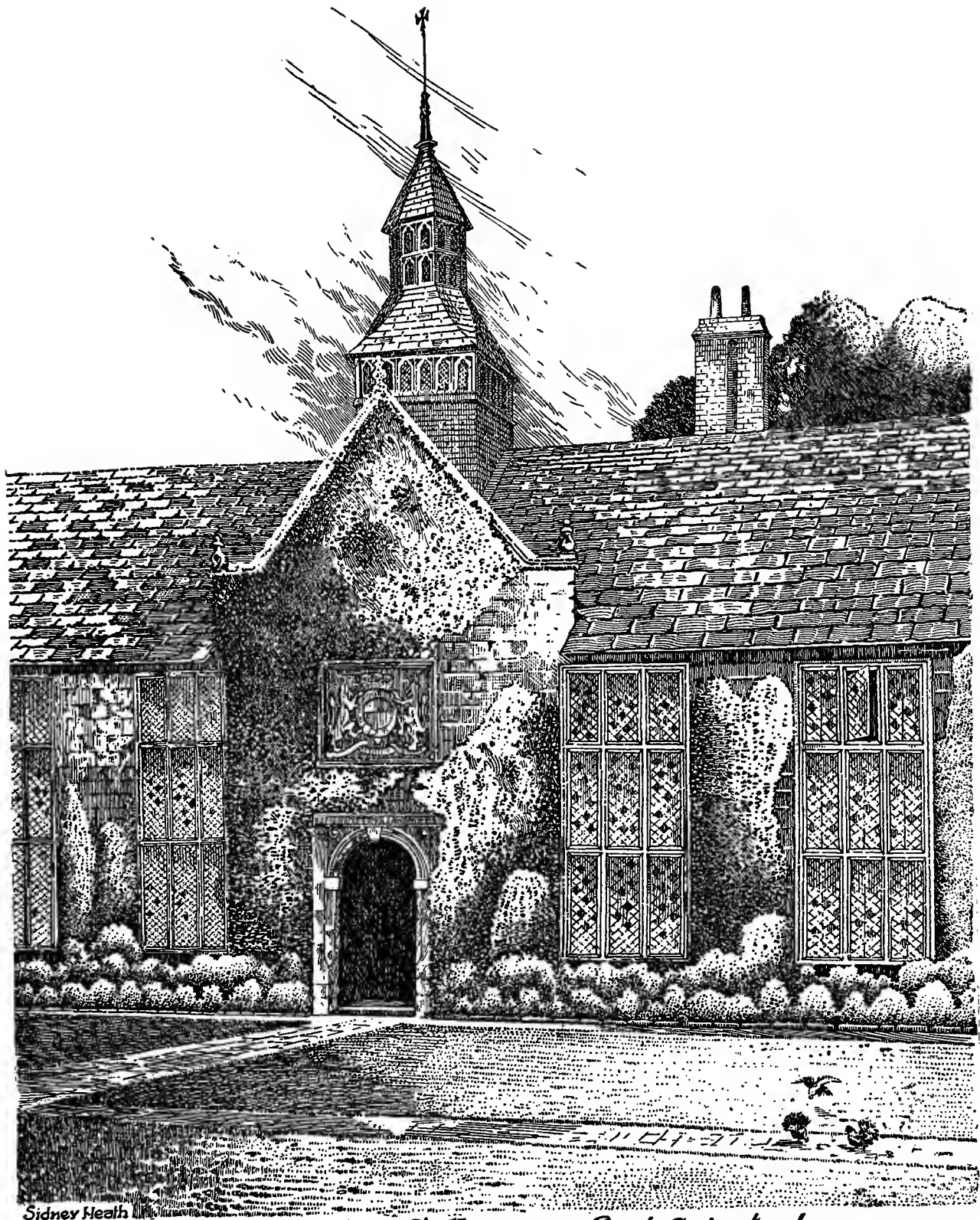
SIDNEY HEATH

Napper's Mile, Dorchester.

Sackville College, East Grinstead

1619.

This interesting Sussex almshouse was founded by the second Earl of Dorset, who by his will dated 1609, left money for the purpose. The buildings, restored by Butterfield, are quadrangular, and have retained their Jacobean characteristics. The ivy-covered walls of the quadrangle exhibit several large mullioned windows and four old doorways. The north doorway gives access to the porch, and is surmounted by a sculptured panel displaying the arms of the Dorset family. High above the porch rises a small lantern. The principal rooms consist of a hall and chapel. The former is now used by the warden, but it was originally set aside for the lodging of members of the founder's family. Above the fireplace are the Dorset arms, and the date 1619, which we may reasonably suppose to indicate the date of the completion of the building. This apartment is worth seeing for its old oak fittings and furniture. The chapel is not quite so interesting, but has retained portions of the old woodwork and an aumbry fitted with an old oak door. The kitchen contains a good collection of ancient fire-dogs, said to have come from Buckhurst, a neighbouring mansion.



Sidney Heath

Sackville College East Grinstead

Abbott's Hospital, Guildford

1619.

The foundation stone of George Abbott's Hospital, the gift of the founder to his native place of Guildford, was laid by Sir Nicholas Kempe on April 6th, 1619, some eight years after the donor's promotion from the Bishopric of London to the Archbishopric of Canterbury. The central gateway, flanked by semi-octagonal turrets and adorned with the Virgilian inscription, "DEUS NOBIS HÆC OTIA FECIT," is lighted by two tiers of windows whereof the upper one is divided by stone mullions into four lights, and the lower one, by the addition of a transom, into ten. Above these is a large sun-dial, and below them the founder's heraldic insignia tastefully carved on a large stone panel inserted in the brickwork. The turrets are surmounted by cupolas, on each of which veers a banner vane.

Beyond the gateway is the quadrangle, about 70 feet square, prettily laid out with walks and flower beds. On the left are the rooms of the brethren, on the right those of the sisters, while in the north-east corner is the Master's House. The dining-hall, an apartment 30 feet long, is panelled nearly to the full height of the walls, and has a fine cornice and a very remarkable mantelpiece with an open fireplace. Like all the other apartments, this hall has retained the whole of its original fittings, stools, tables, and benches. The attached chapel has also many points of interest, including two stained glass windows, the designs of which have been attributed on very slight evidence to Albert Durer. Other attractive features are the kitchen, with its buttery-hatch; the "board-room" over the gateway; the Master's House; and the old black oak, with which the whole of the interior is embellished. Among what may be termed the minor architectural features are the elaborate chimney-stacks, of every shape—octagonal, polygonal, or roughly squared—collected at the top into clusters by bands of heavily-moulded brickwork. It was in this building that the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth was lodged on his way to London, after Sedgemoor; and here also Archbishop Abbott retired for a while after an ill-aimed arrow from his cross-bow had killed one of the keepers of Lord Zouch, with whom he was hunting at the time. This unfortunate incident caused a great controversy, not only among the English divines, but with the learned doctors of the Sorbonne as well, and ended in the grant of a full pardon to Abbott from the King, and a dispensation from the bishops, contrary to the opinion of Lord Keeper Williams, who held that a sacred office could not be held by "a man of blood." Three bishops-elect, one of them Laud, refused to receive consecration from Abbott, and their scruples were respected, while it was gloomily remembered afterwards that the crown had been placed on the head of Charles I. by a homicide.



Sidney Heath.

Abbott's Hospital, Guildford.

The Penrose Almshouses, Barnstaple

1627.

Few of our old towns can show so many old almshouses existing under ancient foundations as Barnstaple. The greater number have been rebuilt or restored many times since they were first erected ; but those founded in 1627 by John Penrose, Mayor of Barnstaple, have escaped any serious alteration. These are situated in Litchdon Street, near the Square, and are quadrangular in plan, with a sort of wooden roofed cloister, the roof supported on stumpy granite columns, attached to one of which is a very ancient alms-box that has received the charitable contributions of generations of Barnstaple's citizens. The entrance is placed in the centre of the front elevation, the covered way being terminated on one side by the Council Chamber, and on the other by the chapel. In the latter there is a fine portrait of John Penrose, the founder of the charity, by Jansen. The buildings consist of twenty dwellings, with accomodation for two inmates in each.



The Penrose Almshouses, Barnstaple.

The Aubrey Hospital, Hereford

1630.

This little half-timbered building at Hereford was founded in 1630 for six poor women—widows or spinsters—of not less than sixty years of age. In addition to free quarters, each inmate receives a sum of money, paid quarterly. The front of the building comprises three gables, and is of the usual half-timbered type, exhibiting massive oak framework filled in with brick and plaster. The mouldings are very good, and the building has not suffered from any extensive restoration.

Almshouses at Lyford, Berks

1611.

A very interesting group of almshouses of a humble and unpretentious type are those at Lyford, about six miles from Abingdon, in Berkshire. The buildings are of brick, and are quadrangular in form, the chapel being on the west side. The charity was originally founded in 1611 by Oliver Ashcombe, a native of Lyford, for the poor of East and West Hanney and Lyford. The revenue is now £300 per annum. Each of the twenty inmates receives four shillings a week. The illustration of this set of almshouses is given as a heading to the Introduction, page 15.



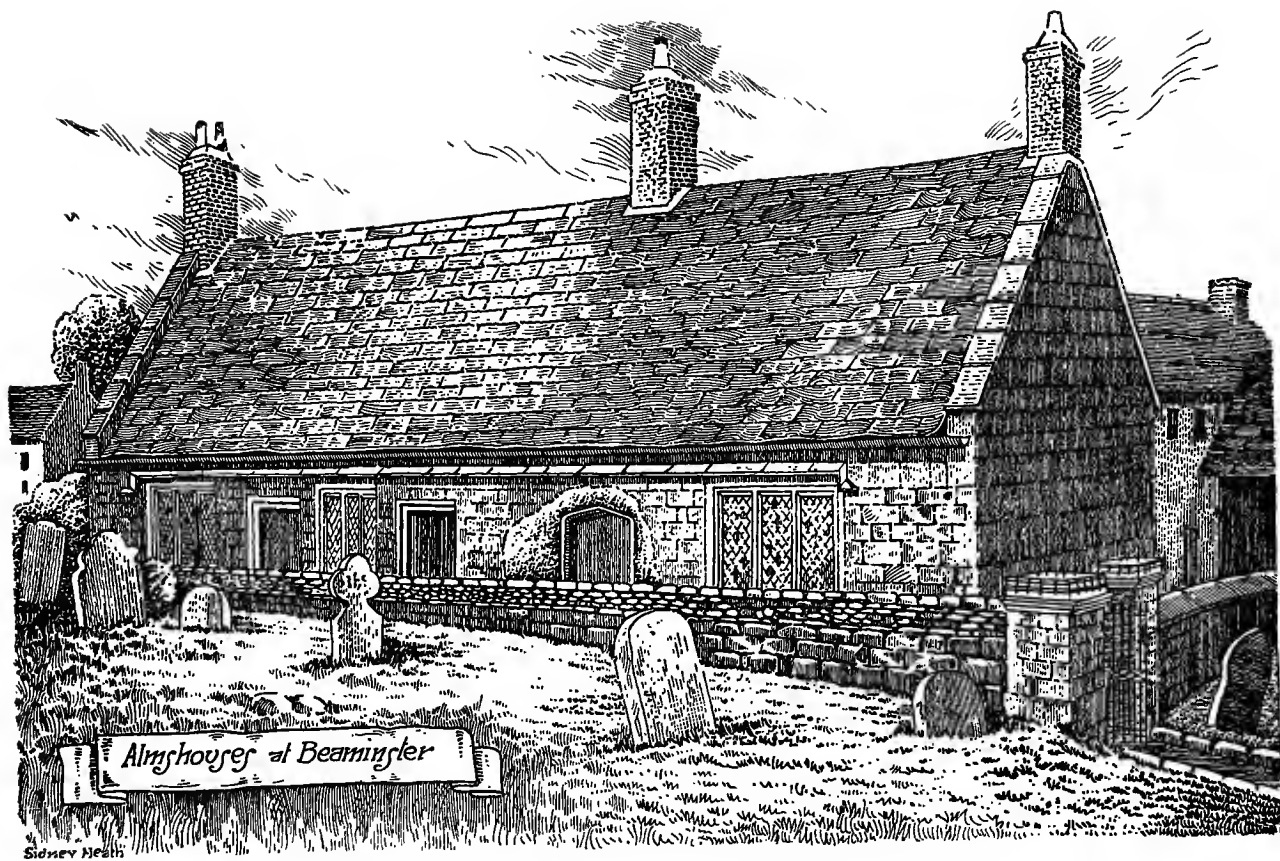
Almshouses at Beaminster

1630.

Beaminster, the "Emminster" of Thomas Hardy's novels, is the most delightful town in West Dorset, charmingly situated in a valley upon which fall the shadows of the twin hills of Lewesdon and Pillsdon Pen. The town lies equidistant (six miles) from Crewkerne in the north and Bridport in the south, and has no railway ; communication from the outer world being by coach, a blessing for which lovers of an unspoiled old town are very grateful. The chief glory of the place is its Perpendicular church, with a tower as fine in conception and as rich in well-wrought figures and mouldings as any to be found in the neighbouring county of Somerset. As a general rule, the churches of Dorset are vastly inferior in workmanship to those of the sister shire, but Beaminster is a charming and quite noteworthy exception. The beautiful manor-houses of Parnham and Mapperton are in the immediate environs of the town, while a short distance away is Racedown Lodge, the residence, for a time, of the poet Wordsworth.

As one would expect, this little town has retained a good number of its smaller domestic buildings, among them a set of almshouses, the front of which is almost hidden from view by the high ground of the churchyard. This building was erected and endowed in 1630 by Sir John Strode, of Parnham, on the site of an ancient chantry house, and this no doubt explains its somewhat peculiar position. The founder directed that six poor persons of Beaminster, or elsewhere, should inhabit it. On one of the stones is this inscription :—

GOD'S HOUSE
SIT HONOS TRINO DEO
ANNO DOM
1630.



Gray's Almshouses, Taunton

1635.

This group of almshouses, situated in East Street, Taunton, was founded by Robert Gray, in 1635. The exterior is a simple but dignified piece of XVIIth Century building. On one of the heraldic panels inserted above the doorways are displayed the arms of the founder, together with those of the Merchant Taylors' Company. The roof of the chapel is surmounted by a small bell turret. The interior also has a few points of interest. The chapel, where the men and women sit apart, has retained much of its ancient decoration and fittings. Here also is an old oak chest within which the ancient documents relating to the foundation are preserved. Among these is said to be an *Inspeximus* of a grant dated 6 Edward IV.

Adjoining the almshouses are two gabled houses, dated 1638, which belong to the charity. The coloured effigy of Robert Gray, clad in the costume of his period, is in the north aisle of the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, whose beautiful Perpendicular tower is noteworthy, even among such a wealth of towers of this particular era as Somerset can boast.

The epitaph attached to Gray's monument ends with the following lines:—

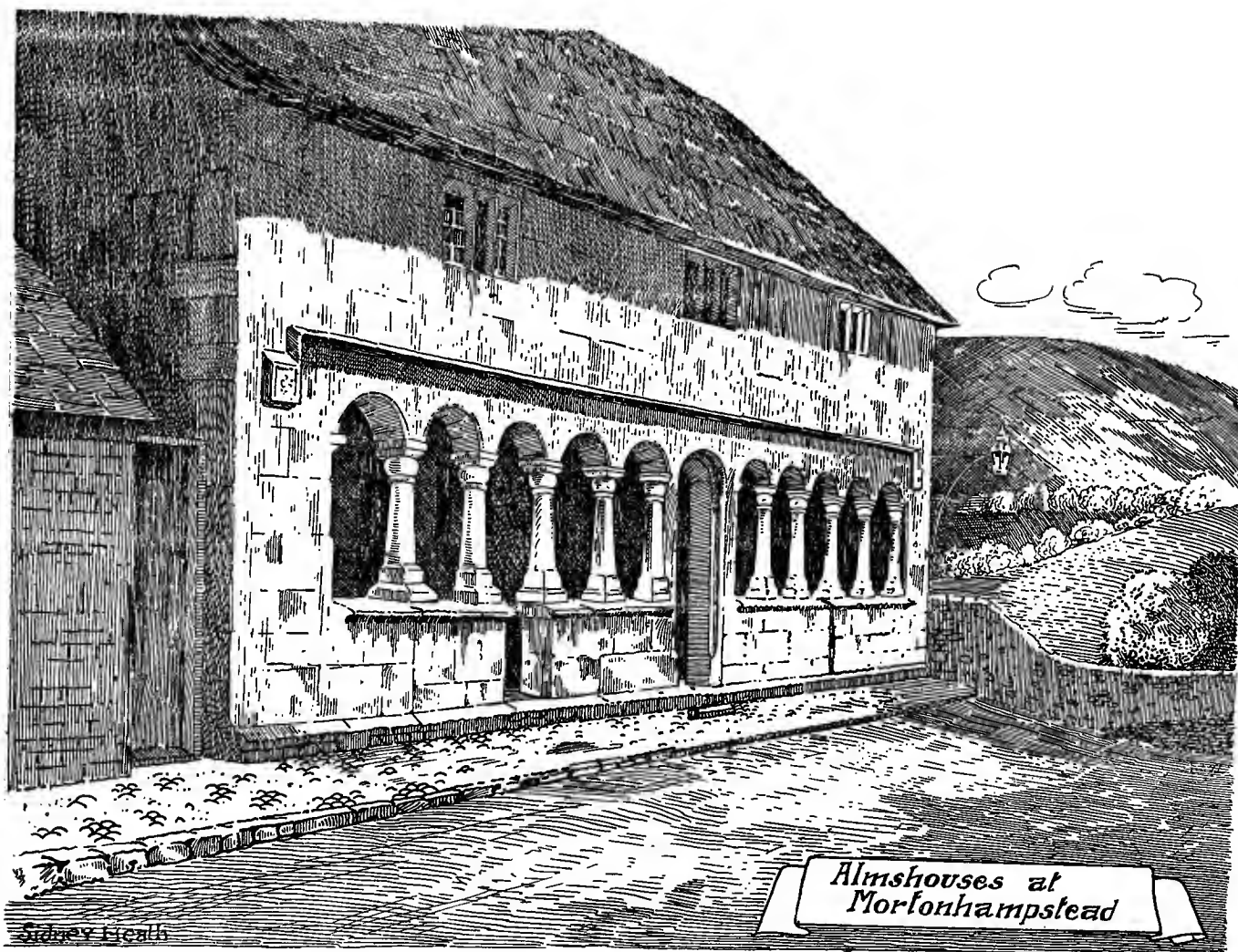
“What he gave and how he gave it,
Ask the poor, and you shall have it.”



Almshouses at Moretonhampstead

1639.

Moretonhampstead, situated on the edge of the true Dartmoor Country, possesses a very picturesque little group of Jacobean almshouses. Along the front runs a little open gallery or cloister, the principal entrance being placed in the centre. Above this covered way is a dripstone, with somewhat unusual terminals, which is carried nearly the entire length of the building. A covering of thatch has taken the place of the original stone roof, but with this exception the little structure is much as it was when first erected. The large blocks of stone with which it is constructed were no doubt obtained from one of the numerous quarries of the neighbouring moor.





The Hungerford Almshouses, Corsham

1668.

It is doubtful if one could find throughout the length and breadth of the County of Wiltshire a more excellent or picturesque group of buildings than the Hospital or Almshouse of Lady Hungerford, at Corsham, seven miles from Chippenham. The great attraction of this secluded village is Corsham Court (the seat of Lord Methuen), with its remarkable collection of pictures ; but the lover of the picturesque will surely revel in the harmonious grouping and ornamental detail of the Hungerford Almshouses, founded and endowed in 1672 for a master and six aged poor, by Margaret, the widow of Sir Edward Hungerford. The original funds provided £20 yearly for the master, and £30 yearly for the six inmates, but the endowment has been increased by Mrs. Alexander. The governor of the almshouse is Earl Radnor.



The
Hungerford Almshouses
Corsham

Old English Houses of Alms

The accompanying illustrations will convey some idea of the charm of this many-gabled stone building, which, except for the insertion of a few XVIIIth Century windows and the addition of one or two chimney-stacks must be exactly as originally built. A free school was at one time attached to the foundation, but this portion of the charity has fallen into abeyance.

Above the highly picturesque west and north doorways appear on a hatchment the arms of Hungerford, surrounded by sculpture of a Renaissance character depicting among other things the “garb” of the Peverels, and the “sickle” of the Hungerfords, both family badges.

The seal of Sir Edward Hungerford’s famous ancestor, Sir Walter de Hungerford, K.G. (A.D. 1425), displays the happy heraldic alliance of the *sickle*, his own badge, with the *garb* of Peverel (borne by him in right of his wife, Catherine, daughter and co-heir of Thomas Peverel), to form his Crest, *i.e.*, a *garb between two sickles*, and such appears on the Corsham Almshouse. Through an alliance with the Hungerfords, the great Devonshire house of Courtenay bore the sickle as one of their numerous badges.

Both the north and west fronts exhibit tablets lettered with the following commemorative inscription :—

“This Free School and Almshouse was founded and endowed by Margaret Lady Hungerford, relict of Sir Edward Hungerford, Kt., of the Honourable Order of the Bath, daughter and co-heire of William Halliday, Alderman of London, and Susan his wife, daughter of Sir Henry Row, Knight, and Alderman and Lord Mayor of London.”

Old English Houses of Alms

High above the gable of the west porch rises a tall bell turret containing one bell. The chapel attached to the foundation has retained its original Jacobean pulpit, stalls, screen and gallery.

The date of the building is usually given as 1672, the year no doubt of its completion and opening, for the tablet on the north front bears the date 1668. It is surely worthy of note that this XVIIth Century charity, with its air of spacious planning, nobly-proportioned rooms, cosy tenements and solid walls was not erected as a manorial residence or for rent-paying tenants, but merely as a home and shelter for six destitute old women.

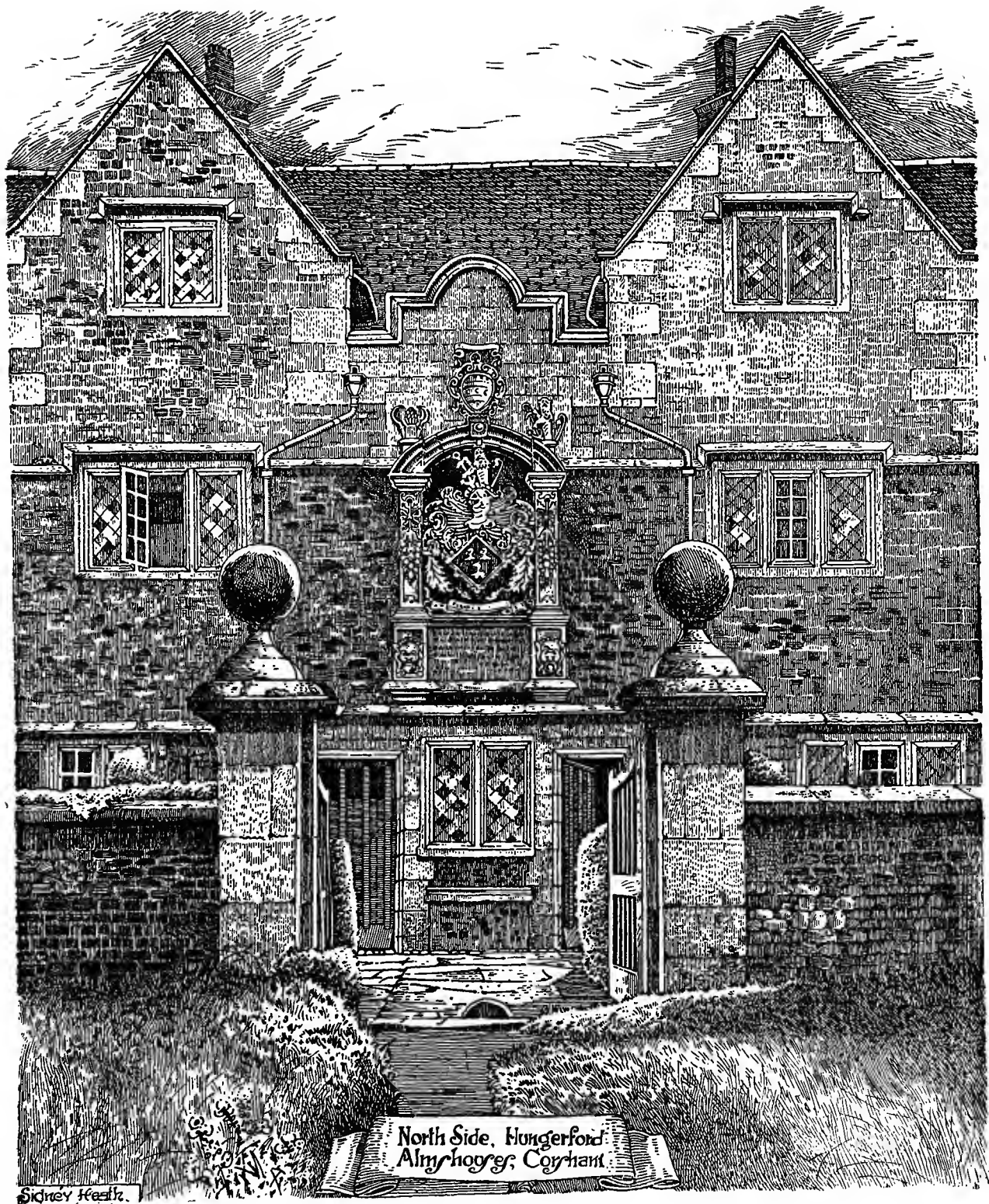
There is little doubt that the four pollarded willows skirting the wall of the west front are solitary survivors of a belt of similar trees that formerly sheltered the building on both sides. They bear evidences of great age, and may well be as old as the structure they still help to protect from the fierce rays of the summer sun, and the devastating storms of wind and rain that, gathering force on the western seaboard, periodically sweep over the exposed downs of Wiltshire, Somerset and Devon.

Through failure of issue male, the remnant of the once vast estates of the Hungerfords went, by marriage, to the family of the Earl of Radnor, where it still remains.

The family burial-place of the Hungerfords was within two beautiful mortuary chapels in Salisbury Cathedral, but these were destroyed by that terrible "restorer," Wyatt. W. H. Rogers, in his "Sepulchral Effigies of Devon," says, "Walter, Lord Hungerford, K.G. (ob 1449) and his first wife, Catherine Peverel, were buried in their chapel in the nave (Salisbury), a beautiful structure, chiefly of iron. Their tombs, joined together and despoiled of their brass effigies, remain in the nave. The matrices exhibit the proportions of a Knight on the one, and of a lady on the other ; both stones were powdered over with

Old English Houses of Alms

sickles and a ledger line outside all. The whole has now disappeared, except the stones in which the brasses were set." Hutchins, who describes these chapels previous to their removal, tells us that round the outside were forty shields of arms exhibiting the various alliances of the family. Among these were Hungerford impaling Strange and Mohun, Peverel, Courtenay Mules, and many other Western families. The remains of one of the chantries destroyed by Wyatt have been removed from their original position in the nave and converted into a pew for the Radnor family. Various compartments are filled with newly emblazoned shields bearing the arms of the founder and his two wives, while the ceiling has a series of heraldic charges showing the descent of the Earl of Radnor from the Hungerfords. The upper portion of this restored family pew contains some very interesting early iron work, indicating that the original chapel must have been originally nearly as good, if not quite so elaborate, as the beautiful iron chantry of Edward IV. in St. George's Chapel at Windsor.



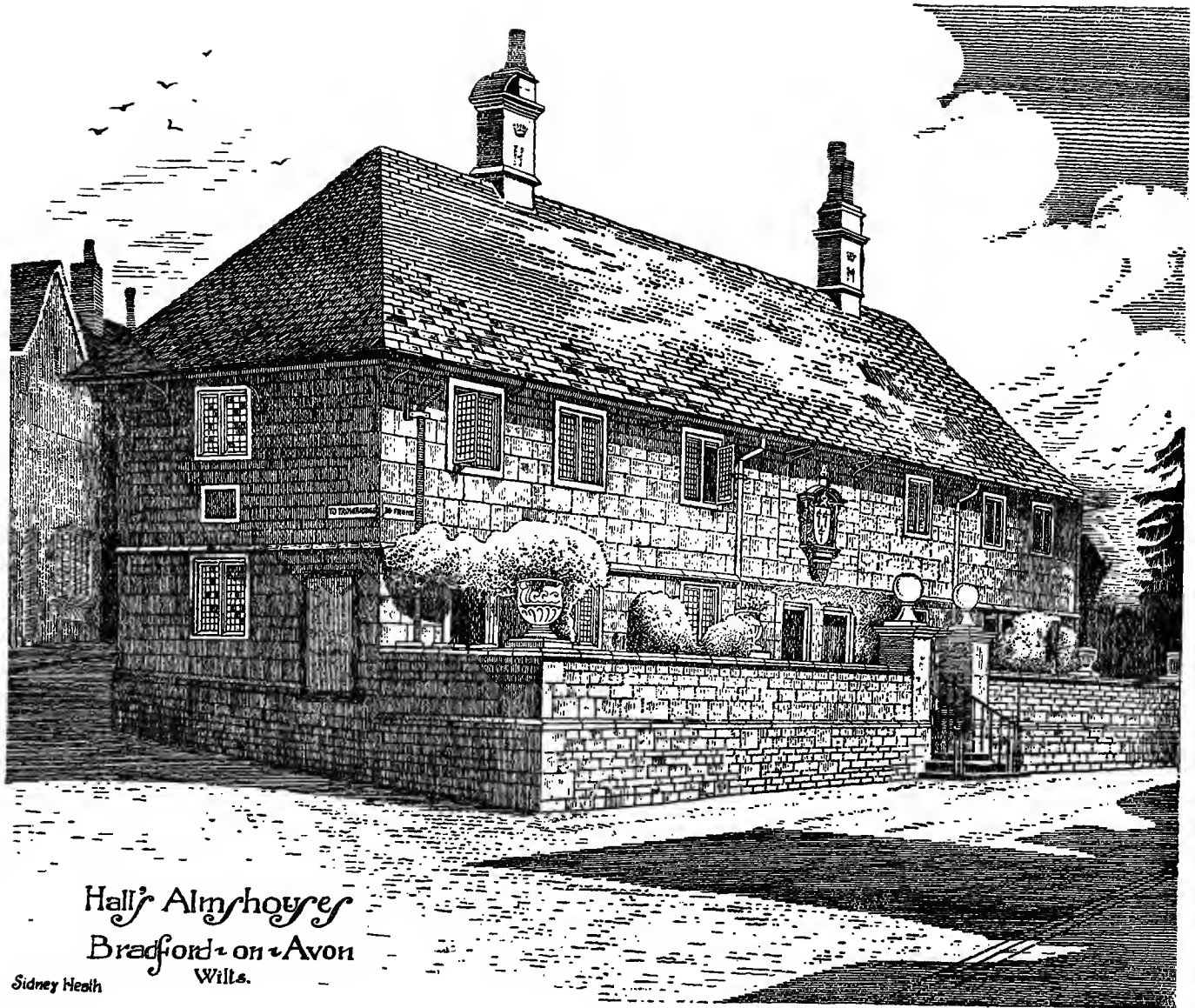
Hall's Almshouses, Bradford-on-Avon

1700.

This building was founded and endowed in 1700 by John Hall for four poor men. The founder was the last of an ancient family who had been associated with Bradford-on-Avon for centuries. One of this benefactor's ancestors, another John Hall, built the interesting but over-elaborate Jacobean mansion of Kingston House near by. The almshouses are built of stone throughout, the blocks used in the front elevation being exceptionally large, even for such a stone-producing county as Wiltshire. Above the two centrally-grouped doorways a beautiful Renaissance panel exhibits on a shield the "three battle-axes" of the Hall family, and the motto "Deo et Pauperibus" (for God and the Poor), to which has been added "improved, restored and further endowed 1891-3 by Horatio Moulton, of Kingston." One chimney-shaft bears the letter H, surmounted by a coronet, for Hall ; the second shaft an M, also with a coronet, for Manvers, the Earl of this name being a lineal descendant of the founder and the present administrator of the charity. At the end of the nave of the parish Church of Bradford-on-Avon is the Chantry Chapel of the Hall family.

The pleasing appearance of the building to-day is due largely to conditions as enviable as they are rare. In the first place the structure is complete, nothing having been added or taken away, while its situation at the junction of two main roads enables one to walk round and view the edifice from all points of the compass. Would that all good architecture could be seen to such advantage.

Bradford-on-Avon has managed to retain quite a number of its old domestic buildings, in addition to its wonderful little bridge chantry, one of three left in England (the others being at Rotherham and Wakefield), and its Saxon Church, attributed to St. Aldhelm, the first Bishop of Sherborne, in Dorset.



Hall's Almshouses
Bradford-on-Avon
Wilt.

Sidney Heath

Tomkin's Almshouses, Abingdon

1733.

Among the numerous sets of charities for which Abingdon is noted, are the almshouses situated in Ock-Street. They comprise eight dwellings built in the form of a quadrangle, of which one end is open to the street. On a large recessed tablet is the following inscription:---

"These almshouses were built in the year 1733 by the order of Mr. Benjamin Tomkins the elder, of this town, and according to the form prescribed by him to his sons, Mr. Benjamin and Mr. Joseph Tomkins ; who were executors to his Will and Testament, by which he gave sixteen hundred pounds, to endow the same for four poor men and four poor women for ever."

This foundation has been further endowed by Mr. W. F. Smith, of Abingdon.



TomKins' Almshouses, Abingdon

Sidney Heath

Sherburn Hospital, Durham

1759 (rebuilt.)

Sherburn Hospital, or, more correctly, Sherburn House (*i.e.* House of Mercy), owes its origin to the well-known Hugh Pudsey, the “Jolly Bishop of Durham” (1154-1194), and was intended for the reception of sixty-five lepers, some of whom were women.

The name “Sherburn,” or “Sherborne” is common to several places in England, and is derived from Scyrburna (*limpidus torrens*, or *clarus fons*).

The building is situated on the Castle Eden Road, two and a half miles east of Durham, and is dedicated to “Christ, the Blessed Virgin, Lazarus, Martha and Mary.”

One of the most beautiful and interesting possessions of Sherburn House is the old hospital seal. It depicts Christ standing, a glory around His head; one hand holds a scroll, with the words “*dato et retribuam*,” while the other supports aloft a crown. Behind is seen the gateway, entering which is a bent and diminutive creature. The inscription reads *Sigilium Hospitalis Christi in Sherburne*. Notwithstanding some slight damage, this seal is in a good state of preservation and is a singularly beautiful example of the seal-cutter’s art.

The original order of Sherburn House provided for five convents of lepers (sixty-five persons of both sexes, with a steward at their head), and further provision was made for three priests and four clerks, one of whom was required to be a deacon. “The priests and clerks slept in a chamber or dormitory adjoining the chapel; and all, together with the steward, dined and supped in the common hall. In winter the priest rose at midnight for the night-mass, but in summer the night-mass was so sung as to terminate at twilight.” A perpetual lamp burned before the High Altar of the Presence, in the Greater Chapel.

Leper’s Chapels were almost invariably detached buildings, totally unconnected with the almshouse, and such was the case at Sherburn, which had, however, two smaller chapels, one of which communicated with the quarters of the inmates.

Old English Houses of Alms

Daily attendance of the lepers at mass was compulsory. All the inmates whose health permitted were expected to attend Matins, Nones, Vespers and Compline in their separate chapels, but on Sundays and High Festivals, High Mass was celebrated in the Greater Chapel, which was dedicated to "God, Mary Magdalene, and St. Nicholas." During Lent and Advent the lepers received corporal discipline in the chapel, in the presence of their Prior and Prioress respectively—" *donec omnes vapulent* " (till all are beaten). The general discipline was severe, and disobedient members were punished *per ferulem modo Scholarum* (with a ferule like boys at school).

The food allowance of the lepers is interesting reading, and whatever the faults of the mediæval system of succouring the sick and infirm, "starvation diet" was not one of them. "The daily allowance of the lepers was a loaf weighing five marks, and a gallon of ale to each ; and betwixt every two, one mess or commons of flesh three days in the week, and of fish, cheese or butter on remaining four. On high festivals a double mess, and in particular, on the feast of St. Cuthbert ; in Lent, fresh salmon, if it could be had, if not, other fresh fish ; and on Michaelmas Day, four messed on a goose. With fresh fish, flesh or eggs, a measure of salt was delivered, the 20th part of a razer ; when fresh fish could not be had, red herrings were served, three to a single mess, or cheese and butter by weight, or three eggs. During Lent, each had a razer of wheat, to make fermenty (Simulam), and two razers of beans to boil. Sometimes greens or onions were provided ; and every day except Sunday, the seventh part of a razer of bean meal ; but on Sunday a measure and half of pulse to make gruel. Red herrings were prohibited from Pentecost to Michaelmas, at which latter season each received two razers of apples."

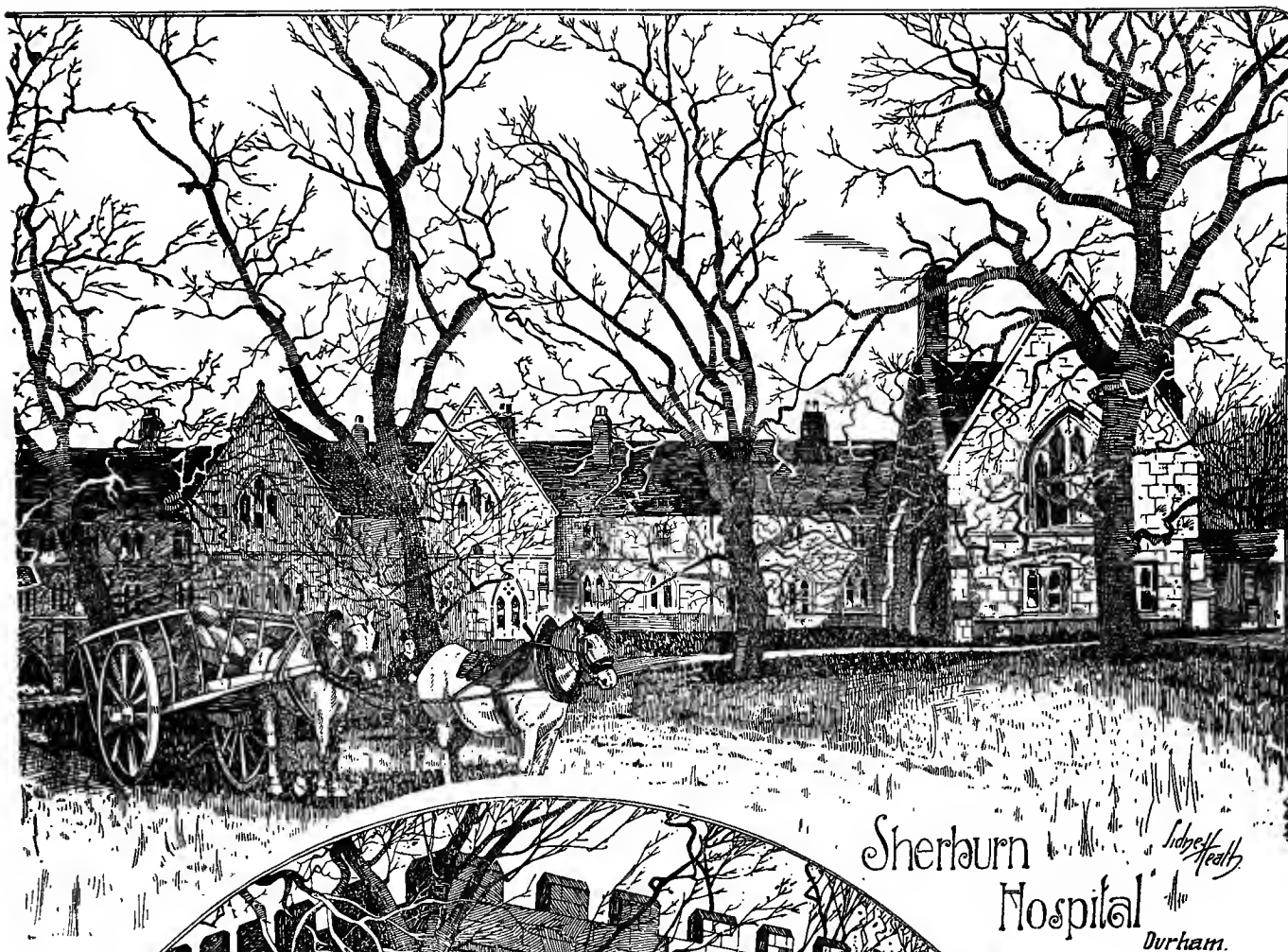
Many other interesting records relating to the lepers are in existence, from which we learn that in addition to a common kitchen, a cook was provided, also cooking utensils, pots, lavers, pans and ale-vats. The sick were allowed fire and candles; the old woman who attended the sick had perquisites in the shape of wheaten loaves, while, in the event of a brother or sister dying, the grave-digger had the deceased person's meat and drink

Old English Houses of Alms

for the day. The yearly allowance for clothing was three yards of woollen cloth, white or russet, six yards of linen and six of canvas. "From Michaelmas to All Saints the fuel consisted of two baskets of peat, and four baskets daily from All Saints to Easter. Trusses of straw were served on All Saints' Eve and Easter Eve ; and four bundles of rushes on the Eves of Pentecost, St. John Baptist, and St. Mary Magdalene. On the anniversary of Martin de Sancta Cruce, a former master, every leper received five shillings and fivepence in money."

When visitors came to Sherburn they were allowed to stay the night at the Hospital. From Miss Clay we learn that the ordinances of early lazar houses show that the theory of contagion had little place in their economy, notwithstanding that the inmates of such hospitals were seldom permitted to frequent the high road except for the purpose of collecting alms, etc.

So the order of the Hospital continued until the commencement of the XVth century by which time great abuses had crept in, the revenues being used for private emolument, and in 1429 Bishop Langley applied to the Pope for a new constitution, which was issued in 1434, one of its terms being "that the Master must be in Holy Orders and to him shall pertain the sole management and discipline of the Hospital, subject only to the Bishop." This constitution is interesting as showing that by this time leprosy had almost died out in England, "forasmuch as now few lepers can be found, 13 poor persons of good character are to be received and provided with meat and drink, to the value of 10d. weekly, and 6s. 8d. yearly for clothing and fuel." In remembrance, however, of the ancient foundation "two lepers are to be received and provided for apart," *Si in partibus reperiri poterint, aut sponte illius accesserint* (if they are found in the neighbourhood, or voluntarily come there). For fifty years the Hospital seems to have been fairly well managed, but in 1500 the funds were again being diverted from their original purpose, and were maintaining priests and chantry, with no provision whatever for the poor.



Sherburn Hospital
Liberty Heath
Durham.



The Gateway of
Sherburn Hospital

Old English Houses of Alms

The condition of the Hospital at this time is summed up in a report by a Mr. Thomas Trollop to the Surveyor of the King's Durham Land. "There is neither poor man nor poor-woman, neither yet priest nor clerk, nor child, found of the house-charge, saving only two Priests, two clerks, and two children, which the Fermor doth keep by reason of his lease; and all the residue of the revenues of the house goeth altogether to the private use of the Master."

Enquiries followed this report, and attempts were made to better the impaired revenues, but no marked improvement took place until 1580, when the position of the Brethren was raised and the finances put on a more solid basis. From this time down to 1735 the foundation ran a quiet and uneventful course, but the Civil war played havoc with the property of the Hospital. "Valuable documents were destroyed, and stocks of cattle and corn consumed by the two armies encamped in the neighbourhood of Sherburn House." Sherburn suffered especially after the battle of Neville's Cross.

At this date another constitution was applied for by Bishop Chandler, by which the position of the Brethren was still further defined, and security taken for the better maintenance of the estate.

So much for the old history of the Hospital. The list of Masters, among them some remarkable men, is given in Appendix I. From the foundation of the building in 1181 to 1855 there were forty-four masters in succession, the first being Arnold de Aclent, who was styled "Rector of the House of Lepers."

The original building suffered much during the middle of the XIVth century from the ravages of the Scots during their Border raids. The old buttressed wall at the entrance is in great part original, but has been patched and repaired at different periods. The main arch of the entrance gateway is original, as is the vaulting within, and the arched ribs. The inner arch, together with the buttresses, date from the end of the XVIIIth century. The upper walls are quite thin, being built to hide a modern roof which sloped

Old English Houses of Alms

from the north and south walls to a gutter between them. Over the gateway is a muniment room for the keeping of ancient documents of interest relating to the foundation. The Master's lodge was pulled down in 1833, and re-built "with no pretensions to that architectural beauty which had formerly distinguished it."

The Hospital Church contains but little of the original structure. It has been twice burnt down, the second time in 1864, when it was re-built approximately in the original style. The tower, which dates from early in the XIIIth century, escaped with slight damage, but was re-faced and had new mouldings inserted. Three of the windows on the south side are original, as also are the beautiful Decorated sedilia.

A small inlaid brass in one of the Chancel steps commemorates the death of Thomas Lever, Master from 1562-1577. The Chalice is Elizabethan, and is engraved with the following motto:—

"Deale justli for God doth se
That Sherborne House owythe me."

The foundation is now a large, wealthy, and important charity, which, owing to the establishment of an outside dispensary, is able to relieve the poor who are physically distressed, in a manner somewhat akin to the intentions of the pious founder.

St. John's Hospital, Heytesbury

The old, and once market town of Heytesbury, situated on the borders of Salisbury Plain, four miles from Warminster, possesses in S. John's Hospital a very interesting charity. The original almshouse was founded by Letters Patent II. Edward IV. (1472) by Walter, Lord Hungerford, Lord High Treasurer of England, and endowed by Margaret, Lady Hungerford and Bottreux, and her son, Walter, with lands at Cheverell, Clinton, etc., in the county of Wilts. The original structure remained standing till 1769, when it was burned down in a great fire that consumed practically the whole of the town. The present hospital, quadrangular in plan, is a pure Georgian building throughout, with the exception of the cellars, which are all that remain of the original edifice. It is probably the largest quadrangular almshouse of Georgian date in the country. The building is approached from the road by steps, whence a grass-bordered walk leads to the main entrance. The building, although rather too much covered with foliage to please the architect, is exceedingly picturesque, whether viewed from the road or from the quadrangular court ; the unambitious and restful nature of the architecture conveying a subtle air of peace and quietude befitting a harbour of refuge for the aged poor.

The charity provides for twelve poor men and one woman, who dwell together in a kind of collegiate way. At the head of the establishment is a *custos* who must always be in Holy Orders, as the founders originally stipulated.

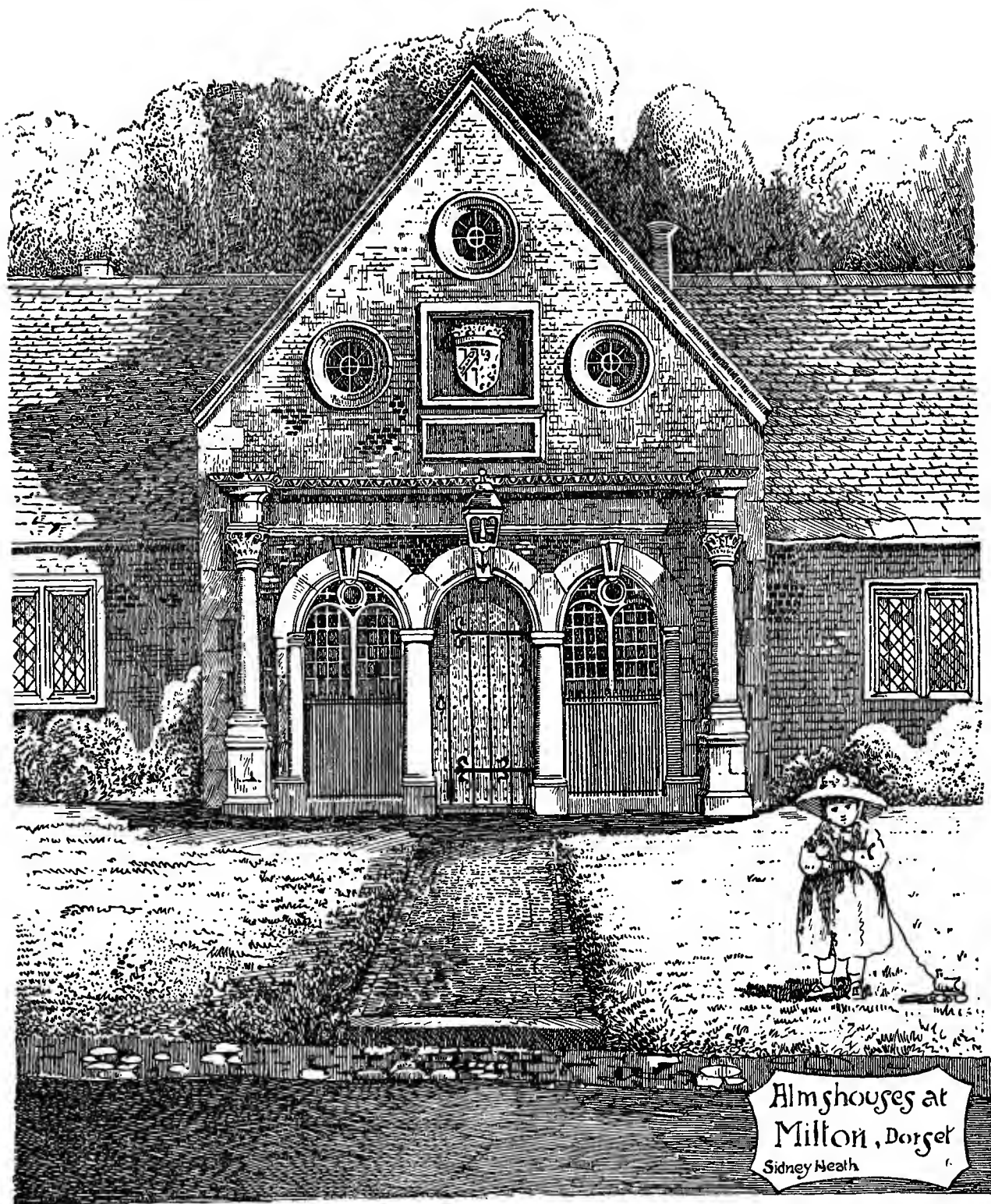


Almshouses at Milton, Dorset

1674—1780.

The old town of Milton (strictly Middletown, as it was the middle town of the county), seven miles south-west of Blandford, was one of the most ancient in Dorset. It grew up with and around the abbey, and contained among other dwellings, four inns, a grammar school, and an almshouse, which last was founded in 1674 by Sir John Tregonwell, for the support of six poor widows. This cluster of buildings lay on the south side of the abbey church, but the whole town was pulled down about 1780, by Lord Milton, as it was in too close a proximity to the new mansion he was erecting, from designs by Sir William Chambers, in which is incorporated the XVth century monastic infirmary. Having swept away the old town, Lord Milton built, with the materials of the demolished buildings, a new one, which constitutes the present village of Milton. It consists of two rows of cottages ; in the centre of one row are the almshouses (the endowment of which was preserved intact), in the centre of the other row, the church.

The almshouses call for no special remarks, save that although the closing years of the XVIIIth century were not particularly prolific in producing good architectural compositions, one is glad to have this interesting Dorset example.



Almshouses at
Milton, Dorset
Sidney Neath

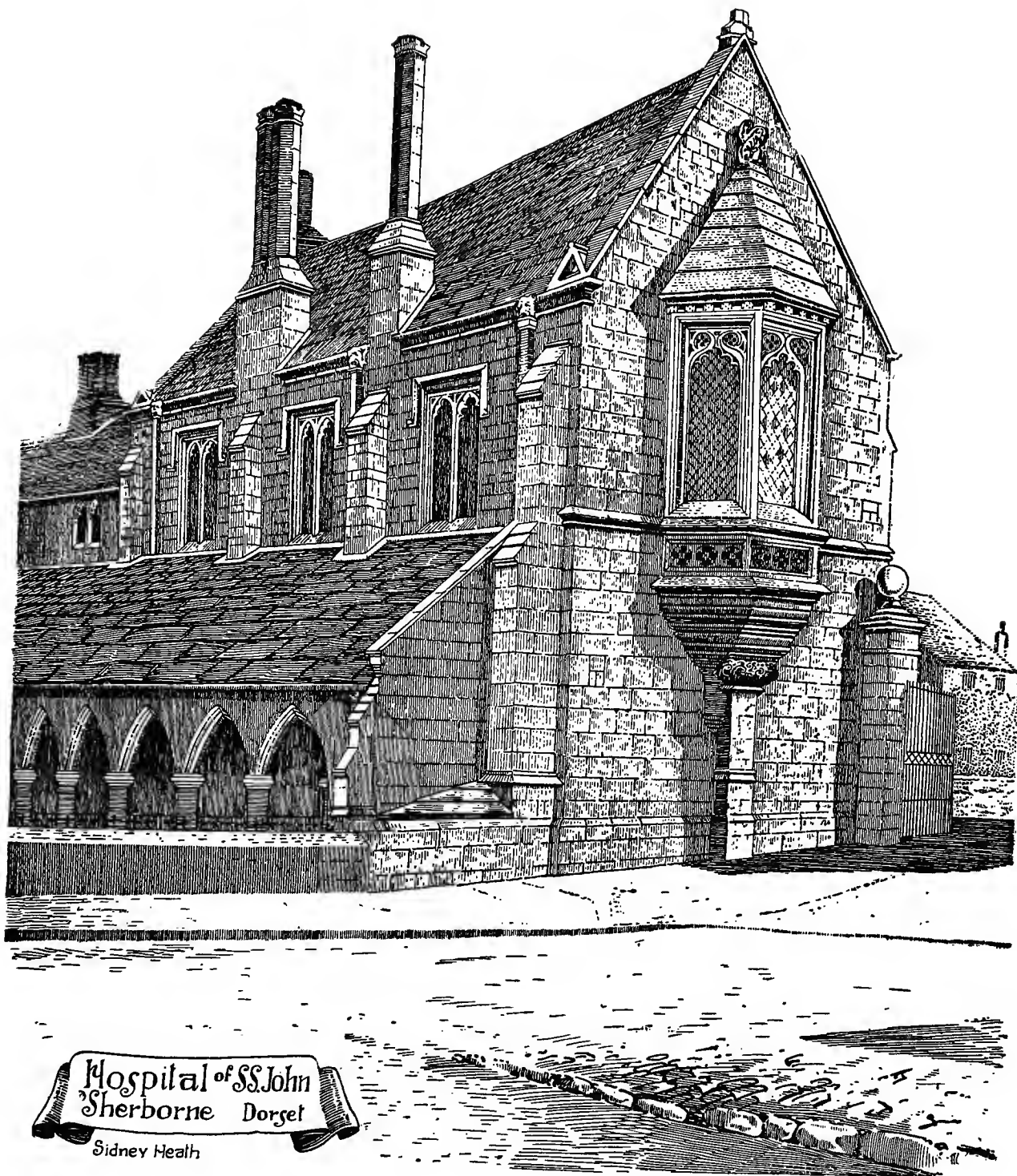
Hospital of SS. John, Sherborne

1437—1866.

The old almshouses dedicated to St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist at Sherborne, Dorset, is a venerable institution that is thought to stand on the site of a hospital of the Order of St. Augustine. The present charity was re-founded in 1437 by a license from Henry VI. to Robert Neville, Bishop of Sarum, and others, when provision was to be made for twenty brethren, to be called the Masters of SS. John's House, and a perpetual priest to pray for the good estate and the souls of the founders and inmates. The house was also to contain twelve poor men and four poor women, who were to be governed by a prior, while the lady who attended to the cooking and washing was to be known as the Housewife of SS. John's House. Leland, who visited the Hospital when compiling his *Itinerary*, writes, "the almshouse stondith yet, but men get most of the land by pecemeales."

The older part of the existing building dates from 1448, and includes the chapel, ante-chapel, dining-hall, and dormitories. The chapel is divided from the ante-chapel by a good Perpendicular arch and an ancient oak screen, above which latter is a gallery for the women inmates. The south window has retained fragments of old glass very similar in design to the ancient glass in the adjoining abbey. The altar-piece is a very fine triptych painting of the Flemish School. From the ante-chapel a doorway leads into the street, and until 1866 formed the main entrance to the building. Two bold niches on either side of the external wall of this doorway once contained effigies of the patron saints of the foundation. The institution now provides for twenty brethren (from whom are elected a master, sub-master, steward and warden), and twenty-seven inmates, eighteen men and nine women. Miss Clay writes, "in memory of St. John Baptist it was usual at Sherborne for a garland to be hung up on Midsummer Eve at the door of St. John's, which the almsmen watched till morning."

As the older portion of this building does not group well from any position, the view selected for illustration shows the east wing, the greater part of which was erected in 1866 from designs by Mr. Slater, the architect who had previously, in 1861, restored and reseated the chapel.



Appendix

LIST OF THE MASTERS OF SHERBURN HOUSE, DURHAM.

1184	Arnold de Aclent (Master unrecorded).	1552	Richard Reed.
1245	Martin de Sancta Cruce.	1553	Anthony Salvayn.
1269	Roger de Leyton.	1558	Ralph Skymer.
1302	William de Insula.	1562	Thomas Lever.
1317	Lambert de Torkyngham.	1577	Ralph Lever.
1329	Thomas de Hessewell.	1584	Valentine Dale.
1339	Thomas de Neville.	1589	Robert Bellamy.
1362	Alan de Shutlington.	1608	Thomas Murray.
1367	Thomas de Bernoldby.	1623	William Shawe.
1384	John de Waltham.	1636	John Machon.
1388	John de Burgeys.	1643	John Fenwick (usurper).
1403	Alan de Newark.	1654	John Fenwick (son).
1409	John Newton.	1661	John Machon (restored).
1427	Nicholas Dyxson.	1680	John Montague.
1433	John Marchall. (Master unknown).	1727	Thomas Rundle.
1490	Alexander Lyghe.	1735	Wadham Chandler.
1501	Robert Dykar.	1738	Robert Stillingfleet.
1507	Roderick Gundesalve.	1759	David Gregory.
1522	Geoffry Wren.	1767	Mark Hildesley.
1527	Edward Fox.	1773	Thomas Dampier.
1535	Thomas Leghe.	1774	Thomas Dampier (son).
1545	Anthony Bellassis.	1809	Andrew Bell.
		1832	George Stanley Faber.

MASTERS UNDER THE NEW RULE.

1857	Edward Prest.
1861	James Carr.
1874	Henry A. Mitton.

Old English Houses of Alms

The above list of Masters contains some very remarkable men, among whom not the least was Andrew Bell, some time Rector of Swanage, in Dorset. Before coming to Swanage, he was for some years military chaplain at Madras, subsequently becoming superintendent of the Military Male Orphan Asylum. Under his supervision, the school rapidly increased, and his great difficulty was to find sufficient teachers. This he solved by employing some of the scholars themselves, a course which immediately raised much enthusiasm among the boys.

Bell came to England in 1796 on account of his health, and in 1801 became rector of Swanage. Here he started the system which he had inaugurated in Madras, first introducing "pupil teachers" into the Sunday School. This was so successful that he turned his attention to the day schools also, and before long Bell's new system of "pupil teachers" became the feature of many schools in different parts of the country.

While at Swanage Dr. Bell introduced straw-plaiting as an employment for the women and children, and at one time, under his guidance, 4,000 to 5,000 hats were made yearly. He was an enthusiast on vaccination, and after successfully vaccinating two of the children at the Rectory, he and his wife performed the operation on many of his parishioners.

He was appointed to the mastership of Sherburn Hospital in 1809, a post which he held for twenty-three years. On his death he was buried in Westminster Abbey, half-way up the nave, and the inscription, which was written at his own request, reads:—

"The author of the Madras system of education."

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